TELOS

Number 90 Winter 1991-92

SPECIAL SECTION ON:

THE LEAGUES IN ITALY

Paul Piccone: *Federal Populism in Italy*
Lothar Baier: *Farewell to Regionalism*
Gianfranco Miglio: *Toward a Federal Italy*
Roberto Biorcio: *Neo-Populism in Italy and France*
Carlo Ruzza & Oliver Schmidtke: *The Making of the Leagues*
Bernard Poche: *From Cultural Autonomy to Integral Federalism*

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Edmund Mokrzycki: *Eastern Europe After Communism*

Reviews:

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Andrzej Tymowski: *Workers vs. Intellectuals in* Solidarność
Willi Goetschel: *Spinoza's Critical Turn*
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John DeBrizzi: *The Uses of Race*

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Federal Populism in Italy

The Twilight of the State

One of the few positive features of the 20th century — the century of mass destruction — is that it came late 1914) and ended early (1989), spanning from the definitive decline of the *jus publicum Europaeum* (and the sovereign state on which it was based) and the end of the Cold War.[1] An era of false starts for utopian social systems and new international orders, uneasy adjustments to a post-colonial world first and post-industrial realities later, it closed with the 19th century problems it originally inherited not only unsolved but even more intractable than before. The increasingly obsolete central state of the previous

1. According to Carl Schmitt, the European sovereign state was the basis of a Eurocentric world order which lasted for almost 400 years and began to decline at the end of the 19th century. The major challenge to this world order was posed by the US, which early in the 19th century, with the enunciation of the Monroe Doctrine, introduced a new order in the Western hemisphere and, later, developed into a world power. Cf. Carl Schmitt, *Der Nomos der Erde im Völkerrecht des Jus Publicum Europaeum* (1950), Second Edition (Berlin: Duncker & Humboldt, 1974), and G. L. Ulmen, "American Imperialism and International Law: Carl Schmitt on the US in World Affairs," in *Telos* 72 (Summer 1987), especially pp. 44ff. Although Schmitt concluded his major treatise on constitutional law with a section of federalism (English translation forthcoming in *Telos* 91), he did not draw the full implications of this alternative to the sovereign state and the *jus publicum Europaeum*. Cf. Carl Schmitt, *Verfassungslehre* (1928), Fifth Edition (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1970), pp. 361-391. He did recognize, however, that the US federal model was short-circuited by its internal contradictions before it could be generalized elsewhere. In addition to eviscerating the original *ante bellum* concept of federalism, the Civil War did additional damage by hypostatizing axiological considerations above and beyond the law, leading to what Schmitt called "the tyranny of value." On the transformation of positive legality into "super-legality," see Paul Piccone and G. L. Ulmen, "Schmitt's 'Testament' and the Future of Europe," in *Telos* 83 (Spring 1990), pp. 3-34. The same fate befell the federalist project of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon when, shortly after his death, Bakunin redefined the "nation" in terms of Marx' concept of class thereby turned what was primarily a political question into a social and ethical one. Cf. "Il Socialismo e Mazzini," in *Michel Bakounine et l'Italie (1871-1872)*, Edited by Arthur Lehning (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), Vol. 2, pp. 29ff.

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four centuries was not replaced by any viable alternative. Instead, it was bureaucratized and extended to penetrate practically all remaining social institutions to the point of eroding the foundations of its own legitimacy, i.e., an autonomous constituency. In addition to the eclipse of the *jus publicum Europaeum*, what contributed to the obsolescence of the central state as Hegel's mythical "reign of objective reason and morality" embodying "the spirit of the people" was, according to Marx,[2] the growth of capitalism (which transformed the allegedly neutral bureaucracy into an agency of the ruling class while simultaneously destroying regulatory market mechanisms) and, according to Arendt,[3] by imperialism (which resulted in racism in the wake of the dissolution of the originally constitutive nation). In other words, economic exploitation and bureaucratic mediatization rendered the very notion of political representation increasingly problematic with the erosion of popular sovereignty and the reduction of citizenship to sub-individuality. The central state persevered thanks only to a constellation of events which now seems to have finally and irrevocably become part of past history.

Despite the ideological stalemate between Wilson's project of global democratization (and its subsequent liberal-democratic reformulations) and Lenin's project of socialist revolution (and its social-democratic variations) this abbreviated century was torn primarily by differences of *degree*s rather than *kinds*. Without equating the incomparably different human costs exacted by the two main systems, and thus indirectly apologizing for the unprecedented horrors of "really existing socialism" or Nazism, it is becoming increasingly clear that their structural differences were more *quantitative* than *qualitative*. Rather than a clash of democracy and "totalitarianism," as liberals claimed, or of capitalism and communism, as Marxists argued, the 20th century was primarily a

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2. Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. by Annette Jolin and Joseph O'Malley. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

3. Hannah Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1951). While Arendt's thesis concerning totalitarianism is questionable (cf. Robert D'Amico, "The Myth of the Totally Administered Society," in *Telos 88* [Summer 1991], pp. 84-88), her identification of the dissolution of community bonds (what she misleadingly identifies as the national community) as a result of increasing bureaucratic intervention and racism helps explain not totalitarianism — a useless concept — but the legitimation and rationality crises (what in the late 1970s used to be called "the crisis of the political") of all post-industrial unitary States predicated on representational forms of democracy and highly centralized administrations. Implicit in Arendt's diagnosis is also the only possible solution: the eventual reconstitution of communities *independently of and against* the state's bureaucratic apparatus, when and if the crisis of the state becomes sufficiently severe to require it.

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struggle between different *types* of democracy — representative versus economic democracy — articulated within the same dialectic of enlightenment, culminating not in "*liberté, egalité et fraternité*," but in two variations of bureaucratic centralism. In both cases a bureaucratic apparatus ended up attempting unsuccessfully to manage a recalcitrant mass of homogenized and disempowered "citizens" increasingly reduced to the status of passive clients.

Contrary to dark forebodings about various "1984s" and "Brave New Worlds," the homogenization projected by this dialectic of enlightenment turned out to be considerably less pervasive than originally suspected. Both the Marxists' and the liberal Left's failures in generating any kind of "new humanity" by means of various projects of social engineering have had, as their positive side the fact that they have thereby caused only relatively limited and temporary damage. The commodity form never succeeded in exhaustively colonizing that pre-modern reality whose residual traditional content seems to resurface spontaneously among the institutional ruins created by the domination of the concept. While the Holocaust stands as a stark reminder of the extreme forms identity logic can take in attempting to erase all particularity, specificity and otherness — a logic still unfolding in various parts of the world obsessed with the purity of ethnic identity — the end of modernity and the decline of the state may also mark its obsolescence.[4]

Caught within the predominant left-liberal economistic outlook which tended to degrade politics to an epiphenomenon, even some of the most illustrious critics of the dialectic of enlightenment failed to realize that the debilitating homogenization they indicted as the plague of the 20th century had been brought about more by the central state than by the commodity form. By subsuming all local particularities, community specificity and regional differences under a fictitious "national" unity, the state tended to reduce various concrete *peoples* to abstract *citizens* who, stripped of their autonomous pre-political identity,

4. Cf. Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989). Unlike Adorno's and Horkheimer's original formulation of this thesis, which still saw the solution in an unfulfilled modernity eventually maturing in mysterious and never satisfactorily explained ways to the point of breaking "the bounds of enlightenment" [Cf. Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), trans. by John Cumming, pp. 187ff.], Bauman identifies modernity *tout court* with identity logic scientism and mundanity. Consequently, it is no longer a matter of completing the project of modernity — something impossible *in principle* and only temporarily manageable by means of Adornian "mimesis" — but of junking it in favor of a much more open post-modernity unshackled by an encroaching instrumental rationality concealing unexamined theological residues.

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readily deteriorated into an undifferentiated *mass* unable and unwilling to sustain their social institutions increasingly entrusted to a separate bureaucratic apparatus. No longer legitimated by its now mediatized citizenry, this bureaucratic apparatus increasingly justified itself through the Cold War contraposition of two warring camps providing each other with the appropriate totalizing other needed to keep the forcibly homogenized masses together. As a result of the collapse of this peculiar bipolar predicament, almost every nation-state today — from the former USSR to what was Yugoslavia, from Canada to Great Britain is confronted with major internal crises of national unity. Even in the US, which still bears the scars of a bloody Civil War fought precisely on this issue, Alaska's governor has been talking openly about "secession," Northern California has called for a referendum concerning autonomy from the rest of the state, and the boroughs of Staten Island and Queens are threatening to break away from the rest of an increasingly unmanageable New York City — and there is even talk of creating transnational macro-regions such as Cascadia, including a significant chunk of the US Northwest regions and Canada's British Columbia. The rise and growth of a plethora of autonomist movements in search of concrete alternatives to the central state constitute one of the main new political realities at the dawn of the 21st century.

An Integral Federalist Alternative?

Immediate reactions to wasteful, unresponsive, inefficient and unaccountable central governments impossible to reform usually take the form of calls for a return to mythical, pre-modern political organizations uncritically predicated on ethnicity, religion, race, language, etc. In a world becoming increasingly heterogeneous — at least for the foreseable future — efforts to institutionalize these idealized pre-modern alternatives are doomed to generate genocides, pogroms or, at best, massive population transfers, unmanageable quota systems and new, more pervasive forms of irrational discriminatory practices, e.g., the horrors of Yugoslavia today. Even if configured in terms of loose federations or confederations, no national identity today can be reconstituted by recycling *past* ethnic identities by, e.g., Croats in Croatia, Basques in South-East Spain, Jews in Isreal, or fundamentalist Muslims in Iran, without creating more problems than are solved. Living communities cannot be reorganized *permanently* on the basis of nostalgia, external threats or bureaucratically mandated ideological tenets. They must develop organically in face-to-face relations and within

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socio-economic networks characterized by *participatory* forms of political institutions which can alone guarantee government accountability and responsiveness. Any concrete populist alternative to the *de facto* bureaucratic centralism of the liberal-democratic state today must emphasize not only the manageability (and therefore the relatively limited size) of the various political units but also concrete sets of shared values which, as all thriving traditions, remain open to periodic reconstitutions and modifications in light of changing social conditions.

This is why, of all recent social movements that have challenged the legitimacy of the central state because of its obsolescence, corruption, inefficiency and wastefulness, Italy's Lombard League appears as the most important and consequential. Its self-reconfiguration from a relatively limited ethnic formation into a broader Northern League calling for the formation of federated "mega-regions" encompassing relatively organic socio-economic zones is beginning to prefigure an alternative model. Although committed to integral federalism from the very beginning, the Lombard League in the mid-1980s was still unclear about its identity, still searching for definition in vague linguistic, ethnic and folkloric terms. Its broadening into the Northern League marks a decisive break with the old *folkloristic regionalism* of the 1970s[5] — what (in this issue of *Telos*) Lothar Baier rightly describes as fully coopted by the late 1980s — in favor of a much more coherent federalism[6] proposing a concrete and tested alternative to the present institutional framework. The League's recent dismissal of language and ethnicity as defining traits in favor of dynamic axiological criteria predicated on predominant local practices — practices themselves articulated within broad macro-regional contexts defined by close cultural interaction

5. For an exposé of the fraudulent nature of this kind of regionalism, see Claude Karnoouh, "Les Chantres de la Rusticité," in *Autrement*, No. 14 (June 1978). An English translation of an expanded version of this article was published under the title "The Lost Paradise of Regionalism: The Crisis of Post-Modernity in France," in *Telos* 67 (Spring 1986), pp. 11-26.

6. Lothar Baier became associated with these regionalist movements at a time when, in the wake of the failure of the 1968 project and its reintegration within Marxism-Leninism or other similar opportunistic currents, some autonomous Left groups associated with the journals *Autonomie* and *Tintenfisch* sought to substitute regionalism for earlier projects of collective emancipation. Because of that Left's uncritical commitment to enlightenment ideology, however, no attention was paid either to populist or federalist alternatives and the whole effort came to naught — as Baier himself now freely admits. For an account of these developments, see Peter Bahn, "Zur Authentizität Autonomischer Bewegungen in Europa," in Kurt Duwe ed., *Regionalismus in Europa: Beiträge über Kulturelle und Sozio-Ökonomische Hintergrunde des Politischen Regionalismus* (Frankfurt a/M: Verlag Peter Lang, 1987), pp. 14-27.

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and socio-economic interdependence — testifies to a growing political maturity and paves the way for a political alternative adequate to the intricacies of post-modern social realities.

As an autonomist regional movement whose political program is aimed specifically at challenging the Italian state — probably the most corrupt and inefficient in Western Europe — the Northern League proposes an integral federalist model which is potentially generalizable at least to all of Europe and may provide an alternative to an increasingly discredited central state as the basic unit of the forthcoming European federation.[7] Caught between a vibrant regional revival predicated on post-Fordism and what Gianfranco Miglio calls "the fifth productive revolution,"[8] on the one hand, and a broader nascent European federal framework, on the other, the traditional nation-state is rapidly losing even its last *raisons d'être*: foreign policy, national defense and a stable common currency. It is doomed to become merely another superfluous bureaucratic layer with no distinct political role. The League's spectacular electoral successes, briefly described by Carlo E. Ruzza and Oliver Schmidtke (also in this issue of *Telos*), prefigure major political changes in a Europe ripe for a radical federal turn. With Great Britain confronted by Welsh and Scottish challenges, Spain threatened by Basque and Catalan separatist movements, Switzerland negotiating its way into the European Community and *ipso facto* proposing its confederal system as a general model, the former Soviet bloc nations disintegrating into problematic regional ethnic units, and Germany stymied by a reunification much more costly and difficult than originally suspected, a "Europe of regions" federated *across and beyond* — rather than *on the basis of* — national lines is becoming an increasingly attractive possibility. If and when it will be time to think seriously about this "Europe of regions," Italy's Northern League may well provide the model. The Special Section on "Italian Populism: The Northern League's Integral Federalism" is an attempt to understand this new political phenomenon and its broader geopolitical implications. Were this

7. Something of the kind is already in the works within the European Parliament in Strasbourg: the parliamentary group "*Arc-en ciel*" (no relation to the ill-fated US "Rainbow Coalition"), including the representatives of autonomist groups from Belgium, Ireland, Scotland, Denmark, Corsica, the Basque regions, Andalusia and Sardinia, is working precisely along these lines. Cf. Daniele Vimercanti, *I Lombardi alla Nuova Crociata: Il "Fenomeno Lega" dall'Esordio al Trionfo — Cronaca di un Miracolo Politico* (Milan: Mursia, 1990), pp. 99-101.

8. Cf. Gianfranco Miglio, *Una Costituzione per i Prossimi Trent'Anni: Intervista sulla Terza Republica*, ed. by Marciello Staglieno (Bari: Laterza, 1990), p. 130ff.

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project of a European federation on the basis of relatively autonomous macro-regions to come to pass, it may in turn suggest a model not only for the US and Canada, both unable to solve the problem of an immense and highly centralized bureaucratic apparatus, but also for the other new *Grossräume* of the 21st century.[9]

The Northern League

Since the phenomenon of the Leagues is very recent — before 1987 the Lombard League was practically unknown even within Lombardy — little has been written about it in Italy and even less elsewhere.[10] For this reason, this issue of *Telos* includes a translation of a collection of short newspaper articles by Miglio, the League's leading theoretician, written over several years and documenting the genesis of the Northern League out of the original Lombard League. Also included are articles (by Bernard Poche and Roberto Biorcio) which provide an overview of the concrete historical context within which the League arose, its place in the larger historical context of Italian history, its significance as a new political movement, and its crucial differences from other new brands of populism such as that of the National Front in France. Together they provide a preliminary framework in terms of which to evaluate the League's political significance and originality — something yet to be appreciated even in Italy, where the mass media's reportage and commentary on the subject has been far from satisfactory.

The latter predicament is typical of practically *all* populist movements and, in the past, this opposition by politicians and intellectuals has been fatal.[11] This time, however, it may turn out differently. Whereas what Gramsci theorized as modernist "counter-hegemonic struggles" and "wars of position" were already obsolete in the heyday of the culture industry, which explains their failure to confront the predominant social and political structures, the League's post-modern populist organizational strategy has succeeded in providing a concrete alternative to the ruling political class: the *partitocracy*.

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9. Cf. Piccone and Ulmen, "Schmitt's 'Testament" and the Future of Europe," *op. cit.*, pp. 29-34.

10. The only available history of the League is Vimercanti, *op. cit.* The only extensive sociological study is Roberto Mannheimer, ed., *La Lega Lombarda* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1991). The autobiography of its leader, Umbero Bossi, sheds additional light on the League's genesis. Cf. Umberto Bossi, with Daniele Vimercati, *Vento del Nord: La Mia Lega, La Mia Vita* (Milan: Sperling & Kupfer, 1992).

11. Cf. Lawrence Goodwyn, "Rethinking 'Populism': Paradoxes of Historiography and Democracy," in *Telos* 88 (Summer 1991).

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In this respect, the League's approach has been exceedingly clever. As Ruzza and Schmidtke indicate, its integral federalist brand of populism has succeeded in articulating a universally acknowleged dissatisfaction within a radical political program predicated on a mode of organization impervious to the standard instrumentalization by the culture industry. In a political context such as Italy's, where lax qualifying criteria allow practically every interest group to constitute itself as a political party, in a few years the League has managed to attract a transversal constituency including practically all social groups, *except* those inextricably bound to the central state and its elephantine patronage apparatus. The latter includes the vast personnel connected with the culture industry, the innumerable state bureacracies, transnational capital presently able to exert national political clout disproportionate to its social weight, large industry, big labor traditionally associated with the leading political parties and, most important of all, the intellectuals. What unites this Unholy Alliance is the state-dependent New Class to which all its members belong.

This predicament makes the League's electoral success all the more extraordinary in that it took place against the best weapons of political domination modernity has devised and whose historically overrated power was the main reason behind all the doomsday scenarios about "totalitarianism," "one-dimensional" and "totally-administered" societies, etc. of a generation ago. Thriving in bars, sports clubs, neighborhoods, informal groups of friends and generally beneath the mesmerizing reach of the culture industry, i.e., a domain of alienated subjects and passive clients, the League has deployed an organizational strategy commensurate with its populism and integral federalism. It has relied on participatory, face-to-face, localized modes of private communication which have managed to retain a modicum of authenticity beyond the double-talk and general vacuity of official public jargon.

The other side of this successful strategy — something for which the League has been strongly criticized — is a preference for a mode of expression often bordering on the vulgar and the employment of what, from a dogmatic liberal perspective, appears as an authoritarian organizational structure. For a populist movement such as the League, however, it made sense, at least at the beginning, to address its constituency in its own lingo, even if, all too often, it was laced with the kind of questionable imagery routinely deemed "politically incorrect" and automatically censored out of the allegedly "undistorted communication" of certified "competent" speakers in the US. Yet in the League's

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early days nothing seemed to cut through bureaucratic mystifications and technocratic rhetoric better than an idiomatic curse, preferably in the local dialect. Not surprisingly, the League leaders' conscious choice of a coarse (or, in their own words, "colored"[12]) lingo was successful in countering the culture industry's logic of domination and in inhibiting its penetration of the populist lifeworld.[13] The lack of the *perbenismo* (roughly: proper behavior) of a terminally corrupt Italian political culture did not hurt the League politically other than by alienating an already hostile mass media and the pious apologists of the existing *partitocracy*.

The charge of organizational authoritarianism is more serious and ultimately involves fundamental issues concerning the kind of direct democracy a populist-federalist movement must develop as an alternative to its representative-parliamentary counterpart. The League's practice of election by acclamation, typical of recently defunct "popular democracies" of Eastern Europe or, even worse, of Nazism and fascism, is a problem. So is its internal hierarchical structure reminiscent of democratic centralist regimes. Bossi's claim that, in order to abolish it all that is necessary "is for the assembly to call for secret ballots and the ballot-boxes will come rolling in"[14] is not a very satisfactory answer. Nor is it sufficient to point to the explosive growth of the movement from a mere handful of activists a few short years ago to the tens of thousands of today as an excuse for delaying the introduction of more direct democracy in local League organizations (after all, that was precisely the excuse given by the Bolsheviks immediately after they took power). While it is true that the League does not have — at least not yet — any Secret Police or any system of lavish rewards to enforce internal conformity, nor has it ever resorted to violence and coercion, the analogies are too close and too numerous for comfort.

The real difficulty here is something more than simply secret ballots, charismatic leadership or internal procedural details — issues important enough in their own right, but rather peripheral in nature. It has to do with the very essence of direct democracy within integral federalism as an alternative to the existing system based on proportional

12. Bossi, *Vento del Nord*, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

13. Bossi readily admits that this linguistic choice had specific strategic objectives: "I consciously gave a somewhat crude configuration to certain passwords and posed at thecenter of our propaganda the queston of dialect both in order to scandalize and to throw a smokescreen in front of the Roman parties which took us for a bunch of goof-offs and postponed raising their guard." Cf. Bossi, *Vento del Nord*, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 91.

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representation and parliamentarism. Bossi himself is vague on these questions and tends to envision the League's organizational structure in terms of Miglio's proposals for constitutional reforms. Developed over a number of years[15] and much too complicated even to outline, the latter are generally modeled on the French Fifth Republic and the original US federal model with a strong presidency, a Senate representing regional interests, a depoliticized and highly professional civil service (as in France), etc. The objective is to avoid the pathologies of the present Italian constitutional framework and usher in an efficient governmental framework adequate to the new European realities. In Miglio's scheme the President would be the effective head of what is the functional equivalent of the US Supreme Court, overseeing, however, the implementation of the mandates of a constitution much more dynamic and flexible than the American one (this is why he only talks about a constitution "for the next 30 years"). Bossi sees his role as the head of the League as parallel to that of the President, entrusted to guarantee the movement's functional equivalent of a constitution, i.e., its objectives and principles. Lacking precise procedures concerning internal democracy, the distribution of roles, etc., a movement with such an agenda cannot avoid appearing authoritarian — at least pending the drafting of clear statutes defining these matters. At any rate, while problematic, the League's present centralized structure has helped keep the movement together during crises. As Poche points out in his account of the Castellazzi incident, when the League was confronted with roughly the same issues which split the German Greens into *Fundis* and *Realos*, the fact that Bossi, was in complete control of the movement prevented it from plunging into a self-destructive factionalism.[16]

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15. Miglio's work on constitutional problems goes back decades. His most recent criticisms of the Italian constitution and his proposals for substantive reforms began in the early 1980's when, as the head of a research team "The Milan Group" he published a major text: Gianfranco Miglio, ed., *Verso una Nuova Costituzione* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1983). Cf. also his *Una Republica Migliore per gli Italiani* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1983); and Stigliano, ed. *Una Costituzione per i Prossimi Trent'Anni*, *op. cit.*

16. The Castellazzi incident, which threatened to split the League and has precipitated charges of "Stalinism" and "authoritarianism" resulted from the decision of some League members, led by Franco Castellazzi, to participate in local government coalitions and share in the political spoils system the League has defined as the main target of its politics. To have followed the Castellazzi road would have meant degrading the League from a radical movement to another political party within the despised *partitocracy*. Short term advantages would have meant long-term extinction as a qualitative federal alternative. Cf. Bossi, *Vento del Nord*, *op. cit.*, pp. 86ff.

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Bossi's notion of democracy is participatory rather than representational. This leaves little room for internal factions which would threaten a regression to the old *partitocracy*. How to avoid factions while at the same time remaining truly democratic is not immediately obvious. These are serious issues confronting not just the League, but *every* political theory and *all* democratic political systems. It is to the League's credit that it has placed them on the agenda for discussion and resolution, within a bold program of constitutional reform. Thus it is not an accident that Bossi's biography ends with a call to rethink the meaning of sovereignty and to consider carefully whether the Swiss, the American or the German model of federalism — or yet another new kind — will be the appropriate one for Italy in particular and Europe in general.[17]

The Northern League in Perspective

What makes it difficult not only for outsiders but also for local scholars to understand the meaning of such a political phenomenon as the Northern League is not so much the lack of reliable information or the distinctly new character of the movement, but unfamiliarity with the particular context within which it arose and the ambiguities concerning how to locate it within the existing political panorama. Even a perceptive scholar like Biorcio, who is otherwise able to pinpoint important internal characteristics as he contrasts the National Front and the Northern League, approaches the matter with discredited analytical tools such as a general concept of populism[18] (derived from the Cold War "end-of-ideology" sociological literature at least a quarter century old) which has historically distorted the deep democratic impulses of movements of this type. Instead of capturing the originality of the several variants of what he labels the "neo-populist model," he uncritically recycles four standard charges — paranoia, authoritarianism, resentment and racism — without critically examining their merits. What is lost thereby is precisely what is truly new and unprecedented in these phenomena.

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17. Bossi, *op. cit.*, pp. 197 and 203-204.

18. Biorcio relies almost entirely on Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner's old anthology on *Populism: Its Meaning and National Characteristics* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1969) for his concept of populism and seems unfamiliar with recent literature. The list is too long to cite, but includes the works of Lawrence Goodwyn, Christopher Lasch, Walter T. Nugent, Bruce Palmer, Norman Pollack, Scott McNall and Franco Venturi. Among other things, this is why he uncritically cites the exceptionally superficial, uninformed, and doctrinaire dossier "Populisme: Le Mal Européen?" published in No. 18 of *Cosmopolitique* (February 1991).

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On close scrutiny, most of what Biorcio lists as characterizing pathological idiosyncrases of movements such as the League turn out to be altogether normal phenomena typical of everyday life in today's Italy. Thus the League's charge of collusion between the traditional parties and the underworld may not be simply paranoia. It is no news to anyone minimally informed about the way modern governments actually work that they do occasionally collaborate with organized crime. In a country such as Italy, in which the political class running the traditional parties has not changed since WWII and roughly the same coalition of parties has remained in power, it sounds somewhat hypocritical to charge the League with authoritarianism. The same goes for the longing for local community as an alternative to increasingly inefficient welfare states: in the last twenty years every US presidential candidate from either party has run against the central government and called for the reconstitution of communities. In a context in which state intervention increasingly threatens community integrity there is nothing exceptionally "neo-populist" in calling for the reconstitution and defense of local communities.

Of all of Biorcio's and other critics' charges, "racism" is the one that has received the most publicity and left the strongest impression abroad. Along with the others, it is equally groundless. While in its early days the Lombard League entertained vague notions of ethnicity as *sine qua non conditio* for community belonging, that was dropped with the shift to the Northern League. There is certainly a concern with illegal immigration, the generally perceived unwillingness of many new immigrants — especially North Africans — to integrate into local communities, and with the inadequacy of existing facilities (jobs, housing, social services etc.) to accomodate those new immigrants legally accepted. But this is nothing unusual: it is part and parcel of standard immigration policies in every Western country. Furthermore, any comparison between the League's official policy on immigration as spelled out in its latest program and, e.g., current US and Canadian immigration policies, readily reveals the latter to be considerably more stringent.[19]

19. Biorcio quotes the serious reservations of a League official concerning the viability of a multi-racial society as indirect evidence of racism and xenophobia. Yet, allegedly, another journalistic poll carried out with questionable scientific criteria indicated that, when asked whether they preferred Blacks to Southern Italians, respondents from a strongly pro-League region chose Blacks. Cf. Vimercati, *op. cit.*, p. 68. At any rate, it is clear that, even before the turn from the Lombard to the Northern League and its de-emphasis of ethnicity, for the League "ethnicity has never been seen in a naturalistic or racial sense, but as the historical result of a long socio-cultural association and of an homogeneous development model which, together, give rise to a people." Vimarcati, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

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Although Biorcio repeatedly lists a number of radical differences obtaining between the National Front and the Northern League, by analyzing them as part of the same general model of "neo-populism" he occludes the specificity of the League, i.e., its successful articulation of populism within an integral federalist framework. Because of its "national" character, the National Front's brand of neo-populism has inherited all the traditional defects of a liberalism too abstract to hold heterogeneous constituencies together within the same traditional state.[20] Confronted with the need to identify common totalizing characteristics defining an irreversibly and growingly heterogeneous national constituency, the National Front has to create mythical ones. No longer predicated on "blood" — that would be racist in the discredited, old biological sense — but on a mythical cultural ethnicity able to play the same exclusionary role as "blood,"[21] the National Front's new nationalism effectively neutralizes and instrumentalizes the stale multicultural arguments of the Left. Unlike the Northern League's regional concept of cultural ethnicity understood as a constantly reconstituted ethos predicated on an amalgam of concrete, old as well as emerging, often conflictual modes of interaction obtaining within self-defined organic socio-economic contexts (the macro-regions), the National Front's nationalism projects mythical and allegedly internalized "French" cultural characteristics not qualitatively different from their "Aryan" counterpart invented by their National-Socialist neighbors a couple of generations ago.

No such predicament confronts the League, whose federalism prefigures internal autonomous constituencies (federations within federations) which can even accomodate ethnically homogeneous communities — if these kinds of social entities do in fact still exist. The federal model today constitutes the only rational compromise between the multicultural chaos and subsequent bureaucratic domination of existing liberal democracies and the monoethnic dogmatism of post-communist societies or National-Socialist regimes seeking a return to pre-modern pseudo-alternatives. Here the League is considerably ahead of standard integral federalist positions which still uncritically fantasize about monoethnic societies as the basic building units of broader federal structures.[22]

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20. Cf. Paul Piccone, "The Crisis of Liberalism and the Emergence of Federal Populism," in *Telos* 89 (Fall 1991).

21. Cf. Frank Adler, "New Racism vs. Old Anti-Racism in France," in this issue of *Telos*.

22. This is still proposed by leading exponents of integral federalism. Cf. Lutz Roemheld, "Europäische Föderation aus Monoethnischen Regionen — Ein alternatives politisches Strukturmodell des Integralföderalisten Guy Héraud," in Duwe, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-52.

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Beyond the "Polentoni vs. Terroni" [23] ***Rhetoric***

Ethnicity was officially abandoned with the launching of the Northern League, thus eliminating any possible confusion with the National Front. What in the movement's early phases were posited as practically irreducible cultural differences traceable to an allegedly hard working, rigorous and honest North European consciousness and its Southern counterpart, a personalistic, informal and generally lax Mediterranean mentality, were now attributed to historical contingencies or the effects of the perfidious unfolding of the logic of the *partitocracy*.[24] Southern underdevelopment is no longer seen primarily as the Southerners' fault but as the outcome of the misguided policies of the corrupt system in Rome. The radical decentralization and federalization of the present unitary state should thus take care of the matter and allow the populations of both South and North to put their own houses in order. Only after this is done will all the new macro-regions be ready to join the new Europe without the handicap of the continent's most inefficient and corrupt state.

This was a necessary strategic move for a movement rapidly growing from a merely regional phenomenon into a national political power seeking not secession pure and simple, but a new federal arrangement among *all* of the Italian regions. What may have made tactical sense for the former would have been suicidal for the latter. After all, it is difficult to gain popular support in regions whose inhabitants are branded not

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23. These are the derogatory terms with which Southern Italians refer to Northerners and vice versa. *Polentone* refers to the Northern dish, *polenta*, and *terroni* refers to Southerners as lazy village dwellers.

24. This fading of the dichotomy between the Southern "Mediterrenean" mentality and the Northern "European" consciousness can be readily documented by comparing, e.g., Miglio's "Per un'Italia 'Federale'," (written between 1987 and 1990, published in this issue of *Telos*) where the distinction is posited as the main reason for federalizing the inefficient Italian State; *Per una Costituzione per i Prossimi Trent'Anni, op. cit.* (finished in the fall of 1990) where the argument for federalism becomes increasingly focused on corruption and the state's irrational and contradictory constitutional framework; and *Come Cambiare: Le Mie Riforme* (Milan: Mondadori, 1992) completed March 1992. In the last work there is only one fleeting reference to the "*two Italies*" (p. 32) and it is couched entirely in terms of the problems of the state's politically motivated and wasteful redistributive policies rather than in anything resembling intractable ethnic differences. Similarly, in his biography Bossi also takes an extremely conciliatory position. Yes, there is still a difference between the two regions: "in the South there is no federalist and autonomist mentality . . . The people of the South have for too long been accustomed to trust the welfare state . . ." (p. 177) but, on the other hand, "the Southern question is the daughter of centralism and *partitocracy*" (p. 179) and, when all is said and done, "both North and South are . . . victims of the same Moloch. But I hope that sooner or later the South will also rebel" (p. 183).

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only ethnically different, but also tendentially parasitic, clientilistic and indolent. This shift, however, has generated new internal problems. The marginalization of ethnicity as an essential defining criterion makes the Northern League acceptable to a national constituency but, at the same time, undercuts the original rationale for a *federal* reform. If ethnicity is no longer decisive, then there is no longer any fundamental, principled objection to the project of the unitary state *as such*, but only to the present corrupt one. If the League's federalism is no longer predicated on the impossibility of the unitary state to accomodate within the same constitutional framework the radically different character of what were earlier presented as two *different* peoples, then its strongest objection to a united Italy evaporates. Unless the League substitutes a clear *populist* (i.e., a strong vindication of participatory democracy and subsidiarity within relatively autonomous political units) for the discarded *ethnic* foundation for federalism, its critique of the present Italian state ceases to be different from that of most of the traditional parties and reduces to another call for a more efficient, responsive and accountable governmental framework which need not be necessarily *qualitatively* different from the present one.

The only possible solution here consists in placing ever more emphasis on a thoroughly *federal* system predicated on subsidiarity and molecular units small enough to allow for participatory democracy and with sufficient autonomy and self-determination to allow whatever community particularity may obtain — even ethnicity — to objectify itself in local political institutions. After all, ethnicity itself is nothing more than this commonality negotiated over long periods of time to the point that it becomes internalized by members of a particular community.[25] The critique of the *partitocracy* must be expanded to cover liberalism and all forms of representations leading to sharp separations of politicians, experts and bureaucrats from increasingly powerless masses of alienated citizens. Such a model would appeal to constituencies far

25. It does not take much insight to recognize, hidden behind it, the ghost of Max Weber and his "Protestant Ethic" — that old Trojan horse of German imperialism, whose fortunes have not fared so well anywhere outside parochial sociological circles. Cf. "Symposium on Weber's *Protestant Ethic*" in *Telos* 78 (Winter 1988-89), pp. 71-108. See also Luciano Pellicani, *Saggio sulla Genesi del Capitalismo: Alle Origini della Modernità* (Milan: SugarCo Edizioni, 1988). Contrary to standard Weberian mythology, Pellicani convincingly shows that the rise of capitalism and, *ipso facto*, of Northern European prosperity, had nothing to do with any mythical mentality. Rather, it was a function of the political freedom obtaining in North European cities but suppressed by the Counter-Reformation in the Southern areas still under the Church's domination.

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more numerous than those presently struggling to reform the state. Although the latter's tribulations are more serious and pervasive, notwithstanding the peculiar forms they have taken because of Italy's particular history, they are by no means limited to the peninsula, but are a microcosm of a generalized malaise affecting all advanced liberal-democratic societies. An institutional solution adequate to deal with Italy's problems may have much broader applications.

This is why the League's phasing out of the earlier anti-Southern polemics is all the more important. An emphasis on irreducible ethnicity was ultimately incompatible with integral federalism[26] since it emphasized a problematic North European formalism (leading to bureaucratism, inflexibility and, most of all, the dialectic of enlightenment) against an allegedly irreducible Mediterranean mentality whose unmentioned positive side includes also a preference for informal personal relations, a mimetic approach to nature and a healthy grounding in the *Lebenswelt*. The uncritical appeal to a reified notion of "European consciousness" is highly problematic. In seeking to explain the horrors of modernity, most of 20th century philosophy — from Husserl to Horkheimer and Adorno, from Wittgenstein to Heidegger and Foucault, has pointed to its *crisis*, i.e., its formalism, proceduralism, pseudo-universalism and a loss of contact with life and Being in its pre-categorical givenness, etc. In overcoming this still largely unresolved crisis, the philosophical otherness of bureaucratic centralism, North European consciousness may have a thing or two to learn from its Mediterranean counterpart within the kind of integral federalist project proposed by the League.

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26. As Schmitt pointed out, federations are possible only among similar units (this is also one of the main points of Leopold Kohr's *The Breakdown of Nations* [London: Rutledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1957] — a little known work which also foresaw many of the problems with central states long before they became the focus of public attention worldwide).

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*Toward a Federal Italy**

Gianfranco Miglio

Introduction

The following series of short newspaper articles were written between September 1987 and the Summer of 1990. They were all predicated on the assumption that the growth of regional Leagues, the decadence of the traditional system of national parties, the emergence of "two contraposed Italies" and, finally, the consolidation of an openly federalist perspective, i.e., the crisis of Italian national unity and a possible federal solution to it, are all connected with the fact that Italians do not constitute an ethnic and cultural entity sufficiently homogeneous to sustain a centralized unitary State. In terms of the causes of the failures of the so-called Italian "regional State,"[1] i.e., a State organized on the basis of relatively autonomous regions, and the progressive loss of authority of the traditional parties, two scenarios seemed likely: 1) that only a substantial, but unlikely, "privatistic" reform of the political system and of public administration could stop Northern Italy's march toward secession; and 2) that only a change in geopolitical relations and in the European international order could result in the "quasi-federal" order the country needs. Since then the growth of the Leagues has long come to pass, but the process of self-correction has not even begun. Furthermore, sudden changes in Europe in 1989 have made a "quasi-federal" reform in Italy considerably more likely.

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* Translated and edited by Moishe Gonzales from "Per un'Italia "Federale," originally published as a supplement to *Mondo Economico*, No. 20 (August 4, 1990).

1. [Ed.] Already prefigured in the 1948 Italian Constitution, this project of a "regional state" was delayed until 1971, long after the central government had already become too large and too well developed in directions that rendered futile any such effort.

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Today even the traditional political parties acknowledge that there is a serious crisis of the system. The growth of electoral support for traditional parties in the Central and Southern parts of the country and the spreading of protest votes in the North are clear signs of a substantive change in the relation between the political class and the electorate. It is a shift predicated on the rejection of the existing system by the country's more active and productive sectors. After having contributed to the development of the single-issue micro movements (such as those of pensioners, anti-prohibitionists, etc.), these sectors seem to have found their interests best expressed by the regional Leagues born in the Po Valley.

Two equally groundless objections are usually raised against these movements: a) that they are a threat to democracy; and b) that they are merely protest movements. Those who raise the first objection identify (and confuse) democracy with the present regime. They assume that those parties in power (or participating in the middle levels of government) are destined to govern forever. They tend to forget that within democratic regimes oppositions are expected to develop and grow along with electoral support, especially when there is widespread dissatisfaction with the way power is exercised. What is characterized as "non-democratic" seems to be the rejection of the inefficient and corrupt way public matters are administered. As such, "democracy" ends identified with bad government.

The second objection collapses with an examination of the Leagues' concrete demands, beyond the invectives and folkloric attitudes typical of all popular political movements at the time of their inception. The Leagues' demand the creation of conditions allowing the populations they represent to retain their identities. In other words, the Lombards should be allowed to remain who they are by retaining their language, customs and cultural patrimony formed over the centuries and transmitted across generations. This is an unchallengeable "natural right" of every population. In fact, in the second stage of the Helsinki Treaties it will be necessary to vindicate small nations against the great (and fictitious) "national State." In order to safeguard the rights of small nations it is necessary to develop "federal" constitutions.

As a corollary to this demand, the Leagues insist that even lower public offices should be filled as much as possible by local people, i.e., those whose families have lived in the territory for more than a generation and, therefore, share the cultural and ethnic-background of those they govern. Such an arrangement would dispel the current sense of being dominated by outsiders. It would not upset the constitutional

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framework. It merely requires that local citizens be given preference in filling local public positions. Public employment would be available to others only after there are no other local candidates. Furthermore, public services should be privatized as much as possible in order to guarantee that they be managed by local people.

The Leagues' third and most serious demand is that public financial resources be redistributed among various parts of Italy in the most open way possible and that in such a redistribution the Regions which contribute most of the resources be assured a proportional recognition of their needs. Beside the duty to help others, there is also the right to grow — especially when one uses one's own resources. This demand is closely connected with a general revolt against corruption, inefficiency and the deterioration of public administration.

The most important plank in the Leagues' program, which grounds all others and presupposes an alternative to secession, is the demand for an Italian federal order. The movement's leaders have gradually come to this conclusion, starting from an initial need for "regional autonomy" and proceeding from two objective difficulties: the impossibility of empowering regions as autonomous entities (as prescribed by the present Constitution), and the ideological deformation whereby public opinion has been conditioned to consider all federal structures as imperfect entities (when compared to the myth of "unity") and, ultimately, as unpatriotic and self-destructive. Italians generally talk about federations only in relation to an international context: as an idyllic world where people stop competing with each other (and where others solve one's problems).

Paradoxically, help in overcoming these difficulties has come to the Leagues from recent international developments and the widespread demand to substitute "contractual" and "federal" arrangments for the rigid "unitary-statist" model. There is a longing for institutional orders which allow populations concretely located in regions, cantons, *Länder*, etc. to establish among themselves and freely manage whatever relations they deem desirable beyond the old national state boundaries. Most importantly, this formula would contain the tendency toward secession.

At any rate, within this framework the leaders of the Lombard and other Leagues have taken a decisive step: they have federated themselves into a Northern League. If it works, it could become a real alternative to the predominant political-administrative system — not only for the voters of the Po Valley but for all "European" Italians. At this point in time, however, there are still too many question marks. More

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certain is that the traditional system of political parties in Italy cannot reform itself. The heads of the parties say as much and they also know that the system is doomed if they fail to regain the citizens' trust by modifying the rules of the game — rules which, where they still hold, have deteriorated into pure clientilistic relations. Competing interests checkmate any effective institutional reform. As a result, what is adapted is a series of marginal innovations which, to the extent that they are useless, contribute to intensify rather than resolve the crisis. This predicament favors increasingly those who challenge the regime.

How could the the old parties change as a result of the growth of the Northern League? It may trigger a further "rationalization" of the system. Unless its leaders make major mistakes, the League is likely to gain a relative majority in Northern Italy in the next ten to fifteen years and displace the Christian Democratic Party (DC). According to statistical analyses, the Leagues' constituency is the same as that of the DC: a broad stratum of emerging groups (including workers, artisans, businessmen, small and medium entrepreneurs, professionals, teachers, intellectuals and many young people) that is breaking with the Catholic party *as a result of growing secularization*.

Because of its efficient clientelistic structure and its prerogative to distribute and manage political revenues, the DC will consolidate its role as the leading party in Central and Southern Italy, thus shifting its base to these areas. Consequently, each of the "two Italies" will end with a party representing it more than the others. The Socialists, who continue to receive support in all Italian provinces, could become the typical federal party, i.e., a party which, because of its ideological orientation, takes responsibility for safeguarding solidarity between the "various Italies." It is highly unlikely that the supporters of the former Communist Party and other smaller parties, which also draw support from all parts of the country, could do anything other than complement the Socialist Party.

The most interesting aspect of the rationalization of the "party-system," which should come about spontaneously *solely because of the impact* of the growth of the Northern League, is that the uneven distribution of the various political parties throughout Italy would diminish the number of competing parties. There will be competition for "federal" offices, particularly for the elected head of government, but the confrontation would be "indirect" because, naturally, all parties, old and new, would continue to be represented in every part of the country, even if only symbolically.

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These considerations imply two other federal aspects not analyzed here. The first concerns the content of an eventual federal constitution. The following analyses mention quasi-federal, federal and confederal arrangements. These terms indicate only roughly the various degrees of articulation of roles within a non-unitary or, better, decentralized constitution. The adaptation of one or the other model generally depends on the historical context within which the operation is carried out. The spontaneous birth of macro-regions (a quasi-federal structure) is a possible path to a truly federal framework. The most important consideration, however, is the distribution of jurisdictions. At best, federal authority should extend to defense, general foreign policy (a certain degree of autonomy should be left to the single macro-regions or states), law (except for justices of the peace), monetary policy and necessary areas of coordination.

The second question has to do with the compatibility of institutional reforms (about which there has already been a great deal of discussion in Italy) and a federal framework. Such a compatibility already exists. The present Legislative Assembly, reduced both in size and in tasks to guaranteeing citizens' rights and interests as "Italians"; a Senate, as the locus of representation and negotiation among the macro-regions and between them and federal authorities (especially with respect to fiscal and financial matters); a Prime Minister, elected directly by the people as a commitment to a redefined national unity and the kernel of an efficient federal government; a depoliticized President of the Republic, heading an empowered Constitutional Court as the guarantor of legality — all of these already existing institutions seem designed specifically for a federal rather than a centralized system.

Whether the Northern League really will be a party different from all others, as its supporters imagine, remains to be seen. Yet, even if this experiment fails, it will be tried again with even more determination and within a context even more disruptive of what remains of national unity.

(May 17, 1991)

The Myth of the Great Nation

Today it is claimed that it is desirable for Italians to become ever more homogeneous and, by the same token, that they should not aggregate to defend factional or corporate interests, in particular the geographical identities which have traditionally divided them ("local" liberties). This dogma has two roots. The first and most recent is the conviction that, by shortening distances and encouraging mobility, improvements

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in the means of transportation during this century are transforming Western Europe into a single habitat, homogenizing life-styles and erasing all particularities. Yet, aside from the ineradicable political root of the nexus between human aggregation and territory, the real revolutionary development is the so-called fifth technological revolution concerning communication, which allows people to establish increasingly complex long-distance relations without having to leave their residences. This is not a paradox. The extraordinary development of the means of communication reinforces sedentariness, imparts a new meaning to location, and a specificity to habits and customs. As a result, two sets of values have developed in interpersonal relations: an "international" (universal) set, and a local (particular) one.[2]

The second root of the dogma of uniformity is much older. It is the myth of the *nation*: i.e., the conviction that, in the great texture of ethnic and cultural affinities, there is always one, and only one, meant to prevail over all others to constitute the base of aggregation and political organization (the national State). This nation is treated as if it were actually a living person — a superior being which generates the State, and to whose requirements all particularisms must be sacrificed.

At least in Europe, however, States have not been produced by nationalities but, on the contrary, by the prolonged authoritarian exercise of political power which homogenized those who were governed and made them into a nation. Massimo D'Azeglio's famous saying, "Italy is made, now it is necessary to make Italians," was an acknowledgment of this predicament: beyond geographic, statistical and ethnological considerations, the nation is as much a political myth as the socio-economic category of "class."

From an economic viewpoint, the optimal dimension of a political aggregation would seem to be the nation. But even here production and exchange requirements seek and find satisfaction in areas larger or smaller than the nation, which is simply the mask modern political classes wear to play their role in the struggle for power. The Liberals wore this mask when they were engaged in disempowering those governing the states existing prior to Italian unification, and so did the fascist dictatorship, when in its orgiastic exaltation of the State it embroiled it in the cult of the nation. This is why, with the end of fascism, the Italian Constituents repudiated nationalist mysticism. Instead of the term

2. The second tendency can also be seen in today's cult of the environment. New modes of behavior testify to modern aspirations to root social life in an ecological habitat.

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"nation," in the Italian Constitution a more distanced and objective term (even if it is always irrationally personalized): "the Republic." Thus article 54 proclaims that "all citizens have the duty to be faithful to the Republic."

The term "nation" appears only twice. First, in article 67, where the mandate between electors and elected is denied and it is stated that "every member of Parliament represents the Nation." (This claim constitutes the main internal contradiction of every parliamentary system and presupposes another myth: that of the so-called "common good"). Second, in article 9, paragraph 2, where it is stated that "the Republic safeguards the historical and artistic patrimony of the Nation." Here the word is meant to collect all references to the past of the populations living within the Republic. At any rate, it could be argued that the literal meaning is that public authority must safeguard "only" the cultural patrimony tied to the idea of "nation." This is possible, however, only by overlooking other essential parts of the Constitution.

The Italian Constitution breaks with the "nationalist" model in Art. 5, which states that the Republic not only "recognizes and promotes local autonomies" but, in Art. 6, "safeguards linguistic minorities with appropriate norms" (presupposing a general principle covering also the protection of dialects). Most of all, with articles 114-133 the Constitution turns its back to the national-unitary type, adopting for Italy the structure of a "regional" State.

A State based on autonomous regions projected by the Constituent Assembly should have been the modern surrogate of the federal State. It was born out of an elementary realization: the Italian peninsula contains populations which, because of climatic, anthropological and historical reasons, are so different that for centuries they have developed constitutions even more different than those of major European nations. In other words, the multiplicity of states obtaining prior to unification was not an accident, but developed out of a reality which, at the time, could have been either acknowledged with a federal constitution, or challenged with a leveling monocratic regime. During the so-called Risorgimento the first solution was advocated by some Republicans (those in Lombardy who followed Carlo Cattaneo) and some Catholics (Vincenzo Gioberti, and those seeking a role for the Pope's temporal power by making him president of a League of Italian States).

Since unifications are possible only by erasing the particular aspirations of the people to be unified, the federal formula was readily set aside in favor of the conquering dynasty's "strong" (military) solution. Originally carried out by the parliamentary monarchy and subsequently

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by the fascist dictatorship, the levelling action eliminated only the most obvious traits of regional particularism. Substantial diversities remained, but in an occluded form. As recent studies in administrative history have shown, "unification" has been more formal than substantial.

When the fall of the monarchy paved the way for a constitutional opportunity, this failure to unify Italy did not result in any major institutional reorganization. The Italians' profound lack of interest in institutional questions resulted in the state apparatus remaining more or less unchanged. During the Resistance and at the time of the Constituent Assembly immediately after WWII, very few people remembered the federal alternative. Except for some factions of the Action Party and of the Republican Party, only a small group of Lombard Catholics around the journal *Il Cisalpino* managed to propose an organic model of a national confederation, concerned primarily with economics and reconstruction. Even this initiative was quickly abandoned. Against all odds, Italian Catholics inherited that unitary State they had challenged for generations. De Gasperi accepted all too enthusiastically the liberal framework and Catholics threw to the wind, along with Gioberti's formula, the only original idea they had developed during the Risorgimento. The *Il Cisalpino* group dissolved accepting, as a lesser evil, the formula of the "regional State," which was sanctioned by Title V of the new Constitution. Many years went by, however, before even this part of the Constitution was implemented, thus resulting in the trivialization of the regional structure of the State, to the point that it lost whatever original import it had.

(September 11, 1987)

The Regional Leagues

Born among the ashes of the fascist dictatorship, the representative Italian Republic took from the prefascist model not only its fundamental parliamentary inspiration but also such other historical defects as a predilection for centralization. Undoubtedly, from a nationalist viewpoint this seemed justified by the uncertainties of the immediate postwar period such as the threat of the secession of Sicily, Val d'Aosta and Southern Tyrol. In reality, however, it was the result of an objective convergence of interests between the top layers of Rome's bureaucracy and the new parliamentary class. Unwilling to tolerate any local autonomy that might challenge their power, this alliance was able to forestall the creation of regions as autonomous entities and paved the way for the construction of a *de facto* extra-constitutional alternative mechanism with which they were able to silence the "small countries." This mechanism consisted in forming ministerial aggregations by choosing

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parliamentarians as much as possible from different regions. The objective was to have each region with a Minister or a couple of undersecretaries in the government — a practice already deployed by the constitutional monarchy but systematically applied by the Republic.

This arrangement, a kind of *de facto* quasi-federalism, is the worst of all possible solutions because it legitimates expectations that every member of government be the natural protector of the fraction of the population from which he has been elected, and configures the Republic, against the spirit of article 67 of the Constitution, as a "clientelistic State.[3] It is precisely this early but subsequently irreversible deformation of the distribution of functions as projected by the Constitution that has subverted the "regional State."

According to the original project, the regions should have safeguarded and perpetuated the cultural and historical particularities of their respective populations rather than become transmission belts for national political power (the parties) and peripheral governmental structures. Far from generating an administrative class proud of its tasks and of its local roots, the regions have become miserly stepping stones for politicians interested in a parliamentary career — the only meaningful political undertaking. As such, the regions are not any different from the old provinces of the centralized monarchical State. Had the parliamentary and the regional political classes come into being at the same time, with the distinct prerogatives that the Constitution assigned them, there would not have been the subjugation of the second by the first, and the degradation of the role of the regions. Adapting themselves to the national and statist framework, the representatives of these allegedly autonomous entities have been reluctant to appear part of their own land and defenders of their traditions — not to mention their role as administrators committed to perpetuating the identity of small countries.[4]

3. This state of affairs was best exemplified when the political representatives from Veneto protested because none of them had been included in the new government, thus testifying to the extent to which such has become a surrogate for true self-government.

4. Thus the Lombard Region has wasted its available resources in searching for a non-existent "working-class culture" which was alleged to have arisen there instead of, e.g., sponsoring the preparation of robust dictionaries of dialects and of the customs surviving in its territory, as was done in nearby Swiss Cantons. As a result, it has ended up with modest and laughable transfigurations of the only true local culture: that of the peasants. If, against this general trend, Alto Adige has been able to preserve its identity, this is due to the commitment of local cultural institutions to evaluate and study every particularity of their traditions, archeology and history. Thus in the Tyrol Valley there is practically no stone that has not been catalogued. As a result, there they did not have to wait for the arrival of the Greens to figure out how to defend the environment.

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The regional system has failed as the guardian of the "little countries" and as the defender of legitimate particularisms in the wake of a silent ethnic transformation which began with the fascist dictatorship and continued after its fall, i.e., the spread of personnel originating from one part of the country to all median and lower levels of public administration. Coupled with the gradual growth of public administration, this phenomenon has left many citizens with the impression of having been conquered and being governed by a different people. It is important to emphasize that this transformation occurred through the "median and lower levels" of the state apparatus. Until the arrival of fascism, Italians had been governed by a high bureaucracy, first from Piedmont, and then increasingly from the South. These were respectable professionals who ran the State Council, the courts, the ministries, the prefectures, police stations, Appellate Courts and the various levels of the legal apparatus, who performed the miracle of the apparent state unity because, in addition to their professional vocation, their authority was rooted in their ethnic and linguistic diversity.[5] No one ever questioned the high bureaucrats from Sicily, Basilicata or Campania who went from one city in Central and Northern Italy to the next, without becoming integrated with the local population, but always accepted because of their role. What is being rejected today is the legion of minor employees such as policemen, school janitors and postal workers, who not only compete with the local people for employment and run public services in the most petty and irritating way, but have neither the background nor the will necessary to become integrated in the new environment. Most of them come North reluctantly and look forward to the day when they can return home. As such, they retain unchanged their "Mediterranean" lifestyle different from that of the "European" Northerners, which is based on impersonal rule and individual rights rather than relations of personal dependence.

It is not an accident that the area in which this rejection has been most evident is the one closest to continental Europe. Clearly, not all the citizens of these regions are defenders of the liberal State (*Stato di Diritto*). "Mediterranean" modes of behavior and Mafia-like phenomena obtain in the North as well. In politics, however, what counts is not so

5. This is because it is easier to obey someone "from far away" than people one knows all too well. This is nothing new. If the English were able to build a modern State much earlier than the rest of the people on the Continent, it was because in the late High Middle Ages the Norman conquest installed there a "different" political class — different in ethnic origins, language and customs — from the local Saxons.

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much what *is* but what *feels* different. What is really behind this latent rebellion against Rome is the intensification of the thorny Tyrolese question where, from the very beginning, the Italian State has confronted an inherent contradiction. A Republic founded on a democratic ideology, i.e., on consensus, cannot indefinitely deny local inhabitants the right of self-determination. This is because the set of values on which the principle of popular sovereignty is based is the old Christian doctrine of "natural rights," one of the most important of which is the right of free association. Those who challenge this prerogative must invoke non-democratic principles such as "might makes right" or the principle of the indissolubility of the original incorporation of the national State — a contract no one has ever signed: pure fiction meant to conceal once again the deployment of force to displace consensus.

To hold on to the ideological foundation of the present institutional order, all that has to be done is to abide by the majority principle: if the majority of the South Tyrol German-speaking inhabitants find it convenient to remain part of the Italian State, the question finally will have been resolved. Otherwise it will be necessary for Italians to carry a passport when entering South Tyrol. At any rate, to label South Tyroleans (and the supporters of regional Leagues) "racists" is pure foolishness. The South Tyroleans' call for more autonomy from Italy, however, betrays the reasons why there are efforts underway in various parts of the country to loosen ties with Rome: the political system's weakness. If national cohesion is the historical product of a strong State, it is not surprising if a "weak government" or, better, weak political thought, results in the loosening of this cohesion. The inability to decide, and therefore the lack of authority, not only encourages challenges to the existing power-structure but, when it translates into inefficient public performances and in administrative disorganization, leads to and justifies secession.

The leaders of the main Italian political parties should confront the following points. First of all, it is necessary to acknowledge the spontaneity of the voters' shift towards regional Leagues. Many voters did not even know the possibility of this option and voted for them without the usual pressures of propaganda, press and TV. Secondly, where the regional Leagues were on the ballot they won most former non-voters. Now that they have a possibility to oppose the system *in toto*, even if in a rough and home-spun way, many of those who had hitherto simply ignored the existing political system now vote against it. This is because voters have not only seen the inefficiency and degradation of

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public administration, but have also connected this unacceptable reality with its "Roman" roots. The blank votes are not the useless residue of a sterile protest, but a possible base of support for a faction of the political class which eventually decides to present itself as an alternative to the system.

The third consideration regards the parties' reactions to the regional Leagues. First of all, there would be a "regionalization" of the parties, whereby some of them, rather than representing single social or professional categories, will begin to represent determinate parts of the territory, i.e., they would become "localized." Thus, e.g., the DC already has its base more in the Center and South than the North. Secondly, some large party could expand into a federation of parties almost ideologically homogeneous, but regionally different (the model here is the alliance of Kohl's and Strauss' parties in Germany).

If the *partitocracy* has reached a point beyond which it cannot expand without destroying the liberal State, then "regionalization" could be a respectable way out since this would express the country's naturally "federative" structure. Any constitutional model which is not of a confederal type will be inadequate for Italy. Presently (1987), however, there is no chance for such a change. Only an unexpected shift of international balances and of the European framework may trigger the restructuring of the country's political system.

Given this state of affairs and the fact that Italian institutions will always be somewhat more wanting than elsewhere, can the tendency toward a "regional secession" not simply be reintegrated? It is difficult to believe in voluntary and efficient measures. Yet, given the causes of the phenomenon, it could be dealt with in two ways. One would be appropriate reforms to strengthen the Government's authority as a directive power rather than as a distributor of political revenues, thus increasing its efficiency (and its impartiality). Another would be a gradual reduction of State intervention in the country's everyday life. The presence of fewer politicians and functionaries, and consequently less hidden or open wheeling and dealing, and more services entrusted to local private entities would render the State's presence less controversial. At any rate, these two changes are also needed for other reasons and will eventually be made, even if they confront considerable political opposition.

(September 16, 1987)

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The European Elections' Warning to the System

The 1989 elections to the European Parliament have resulted in the success of "protest" and "minority" movements such as the Greens and, in Italy, the Lombard League. These labels are supposed to discredit them, as if all political oppositions and new parties are not always born as minorities. It is easy to dismiss this phenomenon as triggered by the voters' need to vindicate in the European context particular interests overlooked at the national level. The growth of protest movements, however, has been under way for some time, independently of any particular electoral results.

These movements are the direct consequence of the weakening of political systems within and against which they occur. People vote "Green" or "Lombard" because they think that existing institutions do not want or do not know how to satisfy their particular needs. This mode of behavior is normal when those in power are no longer able to generate sufficient solidarity to absorb or let people forget the minor annoyances and injustices that characterize Italian everyday life. In other words, "Green" movements and "Lombard" voters document the failure of predominant ideologies.

What is the future of these movements? Will they become new stable political actors able to challenge traditional parties, or will they burn out as fast as they have come into being? Much depends on the unfolding of the crisis of the European institutional model, i.e., whether the State will be able to figure out how to perform once again its original functions and thus regain credibility. At any rate, the Green movement will benefit from the universal character of its cause, but it will find growing difficulties in combining the myth of an "uncorrupted nature" with the requirements of a civilization terminally consumerist. On the other hand, because of its particular objectives, the Lombard League may eventually necessitate a restructuring of local governments less crude and hypocritical than present ones.

(June 20, 1989)

The Pontida Declaration

The Socialists' "Pontida Declaration" has been associated with my views concerning the regions. To clarify matters, however, it is advisable to outline my exact position on the subject. Generally speaking, the present Italian "regional arrangement" is a bad compromise between one of Sturzo's ideas (already obsolete in 1948) concerning local autonomy, and another notion under consideration at that time: the "city-region,"

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i.e., few territories unified under the hegemony of a great metropolis. On the whole, it was an altogether inadequate answer to the reality of the "various Italies" — inadequate to the fact that Italy lacks the ethnic, cultural and historical homogeneity for becoming a "unitary" State. There is no typical region. Rather, there are many profoundly different types of regions. From a geopolitical, social and structural viewpoint, what do Lombardy and Molise have in common? Or Basilicata and Piedmont? Some regions are small states while others are only large provinces. As such, Title V of the Italian Constitution (sanctioning relatively autonomous regions) is not consistent with the rest of the document. It is a kind of "reserve Constitution" — an emergency exit meant for an eventual shift toward a federal or quasi-federal framework when conditions for such a transformation become ripe.

For two reasons such a development may now be taking place: a shift in the international framework and the deterioration of public administration. The point of departure is the reformulation of Article 117 of the Italian Constitution. That distribution of legislative and administrative responsibilities was already unreasonable when originally proposed. Over forty years later it has become absurd. It contains matters clearly of "national" import, while excluding others which are merely of local interest. To rewrite Article 117, however, means to propose and solve the problem of the degree of exclusivity of some of those responsibilities: must they all and always be subordinate to the "fundamental principles established by the laws of the State" (as claimed now by the Constitution) or can some of them be rooted in the natural rights of the portion of humanity incorporated in the region, and therefore prior to the contract which gave birth to the Italian State? The problem can be solved only by confronting simultaneously the problem of the size of the regions. Clearly some public functions can only be organized and carried out within a limited area. Thus, instead of forbidding the regions to reach agreements among themselves (as is the case today), it would make more sense — and this is the second proposal — to encourage them to deal among themselves and to satisfy whatever spontaneous tendency there is to join into larger units. The large regions will not only be better able to manage actual governmental functions. By corresponding and thus giving equal dignity to the "various Italies" they would diminish existing inequalities among the 20 misformed territorial units sanctioned by the Constitution and would eventually result in rational and open policies of support and solidarity. Finally, it would also mean an end to the present anomaly of the five "special" regions.

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Today the mere mention of federal structures no longer provokes convulsions in some hyper-nationalist listeners. The contraposition of unitary and federal States has lost most of its relevance. Are there communities more "unitary" than the US and Germany, which are also "federations"? At any rate, the call not to confuse the efficiency of a system of government with its institutional homogeneity over the territory comes as a result of recent international changes. At this level there has been a constant growth of relations among peripheral regions (such as cantons and *Länder*) belonging to different States. This does not refer only to initiatives such as the the tendency of people living next to frontiers to disregard them. Rather, it refers to the current tendency to establish economic relations, e.g., between Lombardy and Veneto, on the one hand, and the North and the Danube area, on the other.

In light of this phenomenon it is not difficult to foresee that Northern Italian regions will gravitate increasingly toward Mittleuropa, while those of the Center and the South will be attracted to Mediterranean neighbors. In other words, a "macro-regional" or quasi-federal structure may give Italy an optimal international role. Hence a third proposal would be to favor rather than prevent (also because it would be impossible) transnational initiatives and relations among regions. A fourth reform follows concerning the ordering of regional governments. Here the problem begins with Art. 121 and 122 of the Constitution, which prescribe a flat parliamentary model for the regions. The 1953 law and a number of statutes have completed the operation, thus giving life to regional regimes based on pseudo-assemblies as ridiculous as they are inefficient.

The "Milan Group" (a team of scholars concerned with elaborating institutional reforms) had already proposed the creation of a strong government with the direct election of the president of the region with a broad range of discretion in the formation of the council. If and when "macro-regions" will be formed, it will be possible to experiment with modern management models guaranteeing maximum public accountability through fewer elections and more referenda, and rapid, effective decisions. Along with these major reforms, and as their consequence, it would be necessary to strengthen constitutional norms concerning the regions' financial autonomy and controls.

If the mythical "regional State" or a "quasi-federal" system finally is created, two other major national reforms will have to be undertaken. The first concerns a branch of Parliament "truly" representing territorial corporations (a "Senate of Regions"). The second consists in the creation of a strong central authority able to oversee the various regional or

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macro-regional governments, assuring the coherence of foreign policy, the efficiency of public services, the management of national financial resources, and most of all encouraging the legislative body's normative role. This type of authority would not be all that different from that exercised by US or French Presidents. In other words, in a quasi-federal model supreme decisional powers cannot be entrusted to a Prime Minister but require an elected president. Although such a pure presidential republic is suitable for a strongly regional or quasi-federal State, it leaves unresolved a typically Italian problem: the need of an authority which, next to the governing one, would guarantee the legality of the activities of those filling public offices. Clearly, these two functions cannot be carried out by the same person.

The Milan Group's proposal to maintain, next to an elected and governing Prime Minister, a President of the Republic guaranteeing the Constitution, reflected an extremely important need. Considering the sad state of the Italian "liberal State," with the inefficiency, corruption and anarchy of the legal and controlling organs, today the President of the Republic should be stripped of all other functions and placed at the head of a Constitutional Court — as the head of the judiciary and the coordinator of justice. In the US and in France it is possible to point proudly to the famous Baconian image of judges as "lions under the throne" because in these countries the judiciary is a well respected corporation. In Italy, however, if it is possible to shift to a true Presidential Republic, it will be necessary to find at least one solitary "lion" to place under the throne of those who govern, making sure that it has sharp teeth and a willingness to bite.

(March 21, 1990)

The Local Elections of May 1990

Local elections are always influenced by particular interests and, therefore, by the vicissitudes of clientelistic ties. Since they usually do not reflect major changes in public opinion, the shifts in the May 6-7, 1990 elections are exceptionally relevant — especially in Lombardy.

At the national level, the DC has registered a clear decline with respect to previous regional elections, but it has lost relatively little in comparison with the last elections for the European Parliament. This continuity is due to two factors: the thick and resilient network of traditional connections with more or less respectable local interests, and the reassuring image of the present President of the Council. With someone else as the head of government the losses would probably have been higher. At the national level it was expected that, as a result of the

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international crises of collectivist systems and of the harsh polemics that have exploded concerning the future of the movement, the Italian Communist Party would be devastated and some even feared it would dissolve. Within such a context, the communists cannot consider receiving 22-23% of the votes a disastrous result.[6] Although irreversible, the decline of the Italian Communist Party will be gradual. Its voters are likely to shift to the Greens and then to the Socialists who, for a whole series of reasons, faced a difficult test which they have passed rather well.

All these considerations, however, have been contradicted in Lombardy where voters have given the League almost 20% of the vote, making the movement the second strongest political force, severely penalizing local Christian Democrats, Communists and Socialists. The League attracts citizens who consider the defects of the Italian political system intolerable. Similarly, it should not be forgotten that many of those who have supported the other parties also share a negative view of Italian politics but have not yet found the courage to transform their complaints into open protest.

The League's success has been facilitated by the reaction of the defenders of the regime. Instead of ignoring and de-emphasizing the movement, they have closed ranks against it, thus proving to potential voters that they are the enemies. This error is compounded by those who argue that there should be no collaboration with the Leagues' elected representatives. This is likely to broaden the protest movement to the rest of the country. Wherever the League's representatives have accepted administrative responsibilities, they have behaved responsibly. Similarly, ordinary people, workers, artisans, professionals, small and middling entrepreneurs (but also managers of large enterprises and university professors) have been developing a vertical alliance within the Lombard League. This is not simply a bunch of "crude provincials," as the League has been described by its critics. This kind of social bloc should worry those who foolishly hope for the Leagues' imminent dissolution. Instead of defending a political and administrative system leaking from all sides, the political class should undertake substantial reforms. It is not an accident that the League has won in Milan and that the Greens and the Socialists have gained in the rest of the country, since they all demand a change in the mode of governing.

(May 8, 1990)

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6. Probably there was a class shift among its supporters. Numerous disillusioned "proletarians" may have abstained, while parts of the Catholic Left may have rushed to reinforce what they see as the only shield against the capitalists' greed.

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The Commissioning of the Republic?

The elections of May 6, 1990 suddenly revealed to all Italians the real political and institutional conditions of their country. All of the sinister diagnoses about the lack of a true national homogeneity, the existence of two Italies — one "European" and the other "Mediterranean" — and the irreversibility of the institutional and political crisis have been confirmed. In addition to the disintegration of the State as a juridical order (because of its inability to handle both public and private lawlessness), as an organization (because of the growing inefficiency of public administration and services), and as a national unit (because of the public's rejection of the "unitary" model),[7] there is also the fragmentation of the political system.

Both traditional and new parties are taking on a regional character, i.e., they are becoming rooted in one of the two halves of the country. Thus citizens in the North have abandoned national parties such as the Christian Democrats because of the predominant mode of government (clientelism and financial waste) which provide these parties with their electoral support in the South. Those who work, produce and pay taxes finally have come to realize that they have been mistreated, that they have been the eternal and inconsequential "benefactors" of a legion of parasites, and have begun to seek a new political defender. In every society there are always those who are more or less consciously exploited, and those who more or less consciously exploit. This state of affairs, however, lasts only as long as the first group does not become aware of its condition. When it does, the spell is broken: those who contribute rebel, and that is the end of the free-ride for the parasites. The latter, however, do not accept easily the loss of their privileges and fight hard to uphold the system.

Immediately following the elections, the political establishment reacted with great alarm to the success of the Lombard League and the decline of traditional parties in the North. The utmost arrogance was reached with Giuseppe De Rita's advice to "buy them."[8] At that time, in the various parties' Rome headquarters, there were a number of less glamorous proposals concerning possible reactions to the defeat —

7. Cf. Ernesto Galli della Loggia's analysis in *La Stampa* (May 11, 1990).

8. That the President of the Consilio Nazionale dell' Economia e del Lavoro (CNEL), i.e., one of the major representative bodies of the Italian Republic (even if a useless one), could call openly for the bribing of the elected representatives of a competing party says a lot about the degeneration of Italian institutions. Elsewhere De Rita would long since have been returned to private life.

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proposals highly questionable from the standpoint of democracy and legality. There was the temptation to "save the country" by recourse to a sinister *raison d'etat* in view of the League supporters' disrespectful treatment of the "saint" of the Italian Risorgimento and their questioning of national mythology.[9]

If League supporters were to be excluded from the civil consortium (and maybe from elections) because they speak of Garibaldi and Mazzini in unflattering terms, Italy would become the object of ridicule and the epitome of political tragedy. Given that the primary objective of the League is to monitor the transfer of public funds obtained through taxation and State indebtedness from the North to the rest of Italy, the violent resistance on the part of politicians and criminal organizations (now controlling large parts of the South) is understandable. Public financing is indispensable for buying off an electoral clientele and directly enriching Mafia-like organizations which control voters. Now, however, the spell has been broken: the myth of national solidarity, along with respect for the parties allegedly embodying it, has disintegrated and given way to a frank accounting of income and payments. The deformations of the Italian political system had reached the point of no return and voting behavior experts have been anticipating the coming of a major change. Now that the avalanche has begun it will be practically impossible to stop.

In view of the voters' protest, the next elections will have to deal with the liquidation of the present Republican framework. At that point it will be sufficient that the federal elected officials in the Po Valley (the Northern League) obtain a relative majority of the representatives to Parliament from the area to give birth to Padania — the first macro-region of the new State. It will be an ironic re-run, with the roles reversed, of last century's American secession, with the North trying to break away and the South chasing after it.

The best analysts of the present situation merely point out that it is necessary to restore order and legality, along with a minimum of public and private morality. But how is this possible? It does not seem advisable to send South an army of missionaries to try to convert Mafia leaders. It may be possible to strengthen the powers and prerogatives of the head of government: to empower him on the basis of Art. 78 of the Constitution as a kind of extraordinary "commissar" of the Republic. But since some

9. Compare this behavior with the US, where the Supreme Court, in a famous decision, determined that the public burning of the national flag is a legitimate manifestation of political dissidence, protected by the first amendment of the US Constitution.

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parts of the South are already in the hands of organized crime, this would constitute a "state of war." Aside from the fact that the deployment of "extraordinary powers" has hitherto not been very effective, where are the steadfast local prefects and judges who have the will and ability to restore the liberal state (*Stato di Diritto*)? Who is going to deprive rapacious politicians and criminal consortia of their ill-gotten gains and restore some responsibility to public finance?

This is why those politicians who hope to rectify public administration and public services within the brief span of two years are sadly mistaken. In a situation as serious as today's the wisest policy is not to avoid the danger, but to confront it in order to transform it. In the history of institutions, the "new" is always born from the "worst of the old." If Italians today find themselves irremediably divided, then it is necessary to begin with this division in order to reconstruct the Republic. It is necessary to entrust the task to those who (justly) protest this state of affairs and, most of all, to accept the new context.

There have been many proposals to strengthen and rationalize regional authorities by rewriting Title V of the Constitution. Such a decentralization, however, cannot be carried out on the basis of the twenty regions now in existence. They are too many, too different and, most of all, too small. They must be allowed to join into larger units thus obtaining, among other things, the homogeneity they now lack. To bring this about no radical reform of the Republic's territorial structure is either necessary or appropriate (for now). All that is needed is the sanction and invitation to create permanent interregional agreements and managing units, as the occasion presents itself. Since the central administration considers interregional accords a threat to its own existence, this possibility is excluded. (This in spite of the fact that even De Gaulle expressly provided for the dynamic of inter-regional "conventions," when he sought to establish a regional framework in France.) But the time will come when it will be necessary to establish and formalize a new quasi-federal or "confederal" framework for the Republic. By then the "macro-regions" will have already been born spontaneously and will not have to be imposed from above. Having failed to undertake constitutional reform when it was possible to do so in a relatively rapid and self-contained manner, today the process will have to be more gradual and profound, necessitating a whole series of major reforms *in fieri*. This proposal should reassure the political class, whose individual members are afraid of being personally penalized by the change in the rules of the game. At least in the South where there is no other political

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class to substitute for the existing one, it will be necessary to rely on reassigning the responsibilities of those presently in power (and those who preceded them) to manage a new autonomous organism: the Southern State. Finally, since a quasi-federal republic would require a strong central authority, both during the formation of the macro-regions and in the management of the new system, the autonomous legitimation through popular election of the head of government is a reform to be undertaken immediately, along with that regarding the regions' new authorities and powers. If "national" solidarity is in crisis, how is it possible to regenerate it without calling all Italians to elect a common arbiter for their interminable in-fighting?

(May 20, 1990)

Italy United by Rhetoric

Great European "nations" were the result of centuries of strong State hegemony. They are not the premise (as a crude ideology asserts) but, rather, the product of the State — efficient authoritarian State apparatuses such as the ones absolutist European princes were able to deploy between the 16th and 17th century. By the the time Italian unification took place in the 19th century it was too late to turn the various Italian peoples into a "national" State such as France or England — especially within the brief span of less than a century and with a tool as weak as the "parliamentary" Constitution. Thus the model of the great unitary State in Italy was not an audacious "modernization coup" but rather a wager on the past by provincials who had lost a precious appointment with history, as attested by today's "regionalist" challenges within the great States — challenges destined to become destructive precisely with the advance of European economic integration.

At a certain point, the process of annexation of Southern Italy got out of hand. Far from being conquered, the South threw itself into the arms of the new Savoy dynasty. The sovereign's greed and the overconfidence of those devoted to the "national" myth prevailed over the doubts and fears plaguing Cavour during his final months. The python was unable to swallow such large prey. The king's governments taught the "conquered" South how to be a colony with a carrot and a stick: the latter were elections in Giolitti's manner (with the help of "enforcers" such as the prefects and, eventually, the Mafia) and the former were financial grants charged to the Northern economy. It has become fashionable once again to complain of the North's alleged extortions at the expense of the South: one-sided custom policies, public works and cheap labor. But the North's prosperity did not begin with unification. It had been built over

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centuries through the daily initiatives of generations of citizens: initiatives undertaken without, and notwithstanding, the presence of public power.

The South was betrayed by its own political ruling classes which, instead of modernizing the Southern State, became integrated with Rome, thus surviving parasitically by filling the offices of the royal administration. Consequently, the conflict was not between North and South, but between the two parts of Italy on one side and the State on the other.

With its institutional centralism (invented by the monarchy and subsequently perfected by the fascist dictatorship) the State has exploited everyone without performing any meaningful functions. The myth of the "unitary" State faded June 2, 1946, with the fall of the monarchy which the myth had generated and on the basis of which it had thrived. Such an historical event was not immediately noticed because the threat of collectivism rallied the Italian middle classes (and part of the popular classes) around the papacy and its party.

Paradoxically, the heirs of the unitary monarchy were not the Risorgimento parties (i.e., the progeny of the laic intellectual minority which had participated in the "national" adventure) but the Catholics and the Christian Democrats. Hungry because of their long exclusion from power, these Catholics embraced their new role with such enthusiasm as to reverse completely the oppositional role they had consistently fulfilled for a century, and to throw to the winds the only valid political idea they had during the so-called Risorgimento: Giobertian Federalism.[10] This Catholic reversal, however, has turned out to be a blessing in disguise for the federalist project: the opposite "Cattanean" version thus became the only possible alternative for the laic parties forced to recognize that the fading of the collectivist threat has put an end to the impossible dream of the "unitary" State.

In the merciless and wonderful age of all sorts of "secularizations," when all myths and fictions fall by the wayside and the harsh taste for realist criticism is even beginning to reach the multitudes, we must learn to use less rhetorical figures such as "Italy," and deal instead with "Italians" who are — and have a right to remain — different in kind and in history, and to design institutions for sharing only what is strictly useful and necessary.

(June 9, 1990)

10. Thus Franco Cardini calls on the Italian clergy, today disoriented and uncertain, to "think about what they do and study history a little, before becoming the unasked official defenders of that unitary State which, from the very beginning, the Church and the people would have willingly done without." Cf. *Il Sabato* (June 2, 1990).

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The Modernity of Federalism

Groups which are truly homogeneous because of the spontaneous sharing of language, customs, juridical norms, modes of living and thinking, etc. are always numerically small. Normally, true "nations" are micro-nations. On the other hand, great nations are invariably artificial products of political activities, i.e., activities which, having to presuppose common meanings for numerous and diverse populations, are forced to reduce such aspects to an indispensible minimum or, in most cases, even to invent them. Thus the cohesion of great nations does not depend on the texture of spontaneous ties, but on the efficacy of institutional arrangements and, in the final analysis, on the coercive power of those in power. In fact, whether great "national" states remain united or dissolve is a function of the efficiency of the governments that should hold them together. Only rarely can they count on moments of natural collective solidarity which are not a function of fear or material advantages.

Today two sets of reasons render "great-nations" increasingly untenable. First, there is the impact of political science's mercilessly realistic analysis of pseudo-historical myths. This "revisionist" approach is responsible for the liquidation of legendary depictions of the "puritan" and French revolutions, down to the inventors and beneficiaries of the Italian "nation" during the so-called Risorgimento. It is now well known who those "patriots" were: hunters of political bounties and revenues, merciless in eliminating each other to the point of sending to the guillotine the Girondin federalist, guilty of threatening the unity of the recently invented and divinized French nation. Secondly, from Canada to what was Yugoslavia, from Belgium to the ex-USSR, the unitary State is increasingly in crisis because its "static nature" and its size can no longer satisfy the various needs of its citizens by coercively homogenizing them. These needs multiply and particularize relentlessly and to an hitherto unknown extent, giving birth once again to micro-nations as the appropriate natural locations in which to find recognition and satisfaction. Consequently, an entire phase of the history of the modern State — from the 17th through the 20th centuries — is coming to an end. No longer may the State be considered an imposing entity which will always endure, unitary and immobile, across the centuries as a trans-historical reference point.

Today ubiquitous discussions of federalist and pluralist alternatives to unitary models are the most evident signs of future institutional transformations. Due to an only apparently paradoxical event, the ancient and

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more genuine "federative" concept of institutional systems is returning to Europe: the Althusian concept of small scale political-administrative bodies only large enough to fulfill the spontaneous interests of citizens, and subsequently voluntarily connected among themselves or integrated into broader aggregations. Such aggregations are not meant to be eternal, but to last only as long as it is convenient to all involved, and not because of a law imposed "from above," but through free and strongly binding contracts. Submission to someone else's law is thus substituted by the commitment to respect established agreements (*pacta sunt servanda*).

At a time when the "private" seems to be prevailing once again over the "public," when the "political" and freely negotiated agreements win over authoritarian choices and the imaginary injunctions of "destiny," this is the arrangment toward which Italy is headed. As an enterprise once optimal for satisfying people's needs, the great national State with precise borders is obsolete. It will be increasingly displaced by a texture without preconstituted boundaries. Its configuration will be a function of people's concrete needs, extending from a plurality of modest, natural "basic" aggregations such as regional states up to conditional arrangements for vast areas (primarily economic ones). Decisional functions will be preserved and perhaps even strengthened, but always in relation to that texture. Not by accident, the federalism imagined and practiced by the German Calvinists within the Hanseatic framework as an alternative and antithesis to the "Roman" idea of the absolute State is returning today in the wake of German rebirth.

To associate a construction so general and abstract articulated in Italy by the Leagues to the raw needs underlying the rebellions of European or Slavic "micro-nationalists" may be premature. But historical turning points occur when very simple needs find their satisfaction through well developed institutional models.Though they may appear primitive in comparison with today's federalism, the ideas of Carlo Cattaneo, Giuseppe Montanelli and Vincenzo Gioberti were much more in tune with the future than those of their adversaries. It turned out that the federalists rather than the fanatic advocates of unity were truly modern. If at that time Italy had devised a Constitution respectful of the "various Italies" instead of the crude monarchical Statute, today's difficulties would long since have been resolved.

(July 10, 1990)

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The Rebirth of Populism in Italy and France

Roberto Biorcio

The crisis of political forms of representation seems to have been accelerated by the impact of international events such as the collapse of "really existing socialism," the end of the Cold War, growing migratory pressures, and disruptions in various industrial sectors resulting from competition from areas with lower labor costs. As a result, there has been a "rebirth of populism" both in Western and Eastern Europe. Despite national differences, a series of populist movements have developed over the last decade. Characterized by anxieties, uncertainties and widespread fear, they seem to exhibit important common features: the destruction of traditional symbolic codes, the appeal to "common sense" against politicians and intellectuals, the return to "authentic" communitarian traditions and reliance on charismatic personalities.[1]

The Populist Model

Populist movements have been characterized by their reference to the "people" as an homogeneous social unit and the exclusive locus of positive and permanent values.[2] They usually lack an organic theoretical elaboration, and ideology plays a secondary role. This is why different political movements such as fascism and National-Socialism, Stalinism and Castroism can all be labelled "populist." Recent comparative studies of typical cases of populist movements have

1. Cf. the analyses of movements tied to figures such as Slobovan Milosevic, Boris Yeltsin, Jean-Marie Le Pen and Lech Walesa in *Cosmopolitique*, No. 18 (February 1991).
2. Cf. Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner, eds., *Populism: Its Meaning and National Characteristics* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1970).

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identified several constants collectively defining a specific "model" or "populist syndrome."[3]

A) Populism contraposes the "people" to those who are not part of the people.[4] In historical and territorial terms, those who are not part of the people usually include political, intellectual and economic elites and the forces advocating ideologies "foreign to the people."

B) Historical heritage and authentic popular will cannot be expressed rationally (by means of the rules and procedures of formal democracy). They are generally intuited and articulated by a leader. Populism is constituted by a bond between "the supremacy of the will of the people and the direct relation between the people and the leadership."[5] As such, populism rejects the political representation typical of parliamentary democracy in favor of referenda, direct democracy and the presidential system with an emphasis on strong leadership.

C) In defining popular interests and sensitivities, populist movements usually emphasize territoriality and nationality. The "nation" in question need not necessarily coincide with any particular state: it can simply be defined as a regional area seeking autonomy. Populism is thus contraposed both to cosmopolitanism (often attributed to elites) and localistic closures.

D) Often populism also exhibits racist elements.[6] Even if not openly articulated, hostility towards those who are not part of the "people" (or who cannot be easily integrated), is fed by the suspicion of the presence of parasitic or corrupting entities or, more broadly, that "diversity" breaks up the unity of the community.

Since the end of the 1980s there has been a resurgence of populism in the more industrialized European countries. Various new political forces have elaborated traditional populist themes successfully in terms of present conditions and different national contexts. Thus "neo-populism" is increasingly seen as a viable alternative political model. It can also be seen as the result of the crisis of traditional forms of political representation, which has created the *potential political space* within which populist politics can thrive. As articulated by *various new political subjects*, populist activities condition and transform both the

3. Cf. Peter Worseley, "The Concept of Populism," in Ionescu and Gellner, *op. cit.*

4. Cf. Margaret Canovan, *Populism* (New York and London: Harcourt and Brace Jovanovic, 1980).

5. Cf. Edward Shils, *The Torment of Secrecy: The Background and Consequences of American Security Politics* (London: Heineman, 1954).

6. According to Ionescu and Gellner, *op. cit.*, "Populism exhibits a strong tendency towards the racial myth."

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contents and the contours of the potential political space created by the growing crisis of existing institutions.

The new populist political organizations come from many ideological directions. Some of them, such as the French National Front and a few German organizations, have emerged from various extreme right-wing groups; in other cases, such as the Lombard League, the Northern League, or the Flemish Vlaams Block, from movements seeking regional autonomy. Jorg Helder's Austrian Freedom Party (FPO) was originally a small centrist party; the German *Republikaner* party was originally a splinter group of the Bavarian Christian Socialist Union (CSU); while in north European countries the anti-tax revolt has been the new populist parties' point of departure. These organizations began as small groups on the political margins, where they remained for a long time. Unlike most other active minorities, however, they have succeeded in gaining considerable influence because of the intensification of the social and political crises in many advanced European countries in the second half of the 1980s.[7]

The following focus is on two national contexts in which the phenomenon has become significant and may result in the destabilization of the entire existing political framework. Yet in many respects the French and the Italian political situations are entirely different. One need only consider the French electoral system and other political institutions of the Fifth Republic (typically presidential and majoritarian) and the Italian situation (characterized after WWII by parliamentarism and proportional representation) as well as the traditional distinction between the French and the Italian sense of national identity: the first very strong; the second weak and aloof. Even more telling is the impact of extra-communitarian immigrants in the two countries.[8]

The Crisis of the Italian and French Systems of Representation

Since the 1970s, transformations in social stratification, education and modes of communication have significantly altered relations between citizens and political parties. Traditional cleavages defining various social groups have become blurred. Increasingly, complex social organizations involve individuals in numerous situations generating various types of

7. Thus the French National Front reached 14.8% of the votes in the 1988 presidential elections; in the 1989 European elections the Vlaams Block reached 21% in Antwerp. The Lombard League received 19% of the votes in the 1990 regional elections. The Austrian Freedom Party went from 6% to 16% in 1990 national election, reaching 20% in the more recent regional elections.

8. Slightly more than one million in Italy, compared to five millions in France.

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loyalties. At the same time, there is a weakening of the ability of political parties to represent their traditional constituencies because of the general tendency to become "catch-all-parties," increasingly more independent of particular social interests. This evolution is mirrored by the better informed citizen's tendency to privilege "issue-oriented" over "ideology-oriented" forms of political participation.

The anomaly of Italian political culture *vis à vis* other Western democracies often has been characterized in terms of "political alienation," "social isolation," and the "absence of a civic culture."[9] In the mid-1970s cultural particularism was still prevalent in Italy. Italian culture was still characterized by loyalty to restricted domains such as family, clan, village or neighborhood, lacking altogether a national consciousness.[10] Political integration based on partisan political cultures and on the major political parties' direct and indirect associational networks substituted for a national civic culture and individual public commitment. The typical project pursued by the major mass political parties (especially the Christian Democrats and the Communists) has been to broaden their support by means of a network of subsidiary organizations (unions, enterprises, student and cultural groups, recreational associations, etc.) in which individuals could be integrated "from cradle to grave."

The influence of these traditional political subcultures in Italy has been determined for the most part by their ability to establish "vital" relations with the most important subcultural organizations based on region or class by assimilating and transforming them. Thus it has become a commonplace to designate "white"' and "red" zones to refer to territorial areas in which the predominant political tradition has been strongly integrated with local subcultures. An analogous relation has developed with various class-based subcultures. One need only recall the relation between the workers' subculture and socialist-communist institutions and those — diversified within regional contexts — between the traditional middle classes (small entrepreneurs, artisans, farmers) and the two main political subcultures. This is why these typically Italian particularisms have not been surperseded by any national political cultures (with liberal-democratic orientations).

Over the years this state of affairs generated such a stable political

9. Cf. Gabriel A. Almond and Steven Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965).

10. Cf. Robert N. Bellah, "Le Cinque Religioni dell'Italia Moderna," in Fabio Luca Cavazza and Stephen R. Graubard eds., *Il Caso Italiano* (Milan: Garzanti, 1974).

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framework that it had no problems withstanding the crisis of the 1970s. Since WWII, elections have been characterized by the constant presence of some 7 or 8 parties (the Christian Democrats, the Communists, the Socialists, the Neo-Fascists, the Repulicans, the Social-Democrats, the Liberals and — up to the 1970s — the Monarchists).

In the last ten years, however, large sectors of the electorate have shown dissatisfaction and restlessness. One indication of this state of affairs is a growing abstentionism, up from 8.4% in 1976 to 19.1% in 1990. Similarly, electoral mobility has increased, reflecting not any particular shift to the "Right" or the "Left," but merely a vague search for alternatives.[11] This also indicates a growing erosion of the long-standing practice of voting on the basis of subcultural belonging, documented by the fall of the sum of the votes received by the two main political parties (the Christian Democrats and the Communists), from 67.8% in 1975 to 46.4% in 1990. The strength of the two main governing parties (the Christian Democrats and the Socialists) became increasingly dependent (especially in the South) on their control of the flow of state funds and the means of mass communication. Although successful *vis à vis* the traditional opposition parties (the Communists and the Neo-Fascists), this way of maintaining the dominant governing positions has led to an erosion of the citizens' faith in the party-system — especially in the northern regions. Consequently, during the 1980s, along with abstentionism, the electoral strength of parties outside traditional ideological oppositions has grown from 2.5% in 1976 to 12% in 1990.

In France there is a long tradition of distrust of political parties going back to the 19th century.[12] This impatience with the *partitocracy* reached the breaking point during the crisis of the Fourth Republic. Criticism was focused primarily on the excessive number of parties in parliament, and on the government's chronic instability. At that time, little more than half the citizens identified with one of the existing parties.

This picture changed radically in 1958 with the Fifth Republic. The number of parliamentary groups fell from 14 (in April 1958) to 4 (in 1982). Party identification grew significantly to 66% of the votes in 1963 to 85% in 1978. The government shift which took place with Mitterrand's further increased faith in the system of representation.[13] The

11. Cf. Roberto Biorcio and Paolo Natale, "La Mobilità Elettorale negli Anni Ottanta," in *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*, No. 3 (1989).

12. Cf. M. Charlot, "La Transformation de l'Image des Parties Français," in *Revue Français de Science Politique*, No. 1 (1986).

13. According to Charlot, *op. cit.*, "In May-June 1981 the Left coming to power also contributed indirecly to reinforcing the legitimacy of political party politics."

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old distrust of parties, however, progressively reemerged in the second half of the 1980s as a result of disillusionment with the politics of the two main poles of the French political system.

The Right (the RPR: *Rassemblement pour la Republique* and the UDF: *Union Democratique Française*) was no longer able to represent effectively the "conservative bloc," especially after Jacques Chirac's defeat in the 1988 presidential elections.[14] The success of the National Front further contributed to intensifying the crisis of the moderate Right. The governing politics of the Socialist Party disappointed the Left and the Center-Left electorate *vis à vis* the expectations raised after Mitterrand's victories in 1981 and 1988. In 1989 the number of French citizens claiming to be "very close" or "close enough" to a political party reached extremely low levels in comparison to other European countries. In the last two years, the parties' credibility has collapsed even more. According to a recent study, only 20% of the French identify with a party, 19% with a political leader, and 15% with a union. A similar study conducted by the same institute in 1989 measured party identification as high as 39% for parties, 35% for political leaders and 23% for unions.

The crisis of the system of representation can also be measured by other means. Electoral support for parties that have hitherto managed the institutions of the Fifth Republic has rapidly declined during the last 15 years. In the 1976 legislative elections the Socialist Party, the UDF and the RPR received together 73.6% of the votes. In a March 1992 opinion poll only half of the people seemed inclined to vote for these parties (18% for the Socialists and 33% for RPR-UDF. The same opinion poll also showed that, along with distrust of the "historical" political parties of the Fifth Republic, support for the new parties grew: with 15.5% of the vote going to the National Front and 14% to the Greens. At the beginning of the 1990s the crisis of the Italian and French systems of representation seemed to have reached a crucial turning point. Traditional political organizations seemed to have been delegitimated, raising once again questions concerning the existing rules and procedures for voting.

The National-Populism of the National Front

The National Front was founded in 1972 by Jean-Marie Le Pen, after a long period of collaboration with groups and movements associated with the extreme Right. In the 1950s he was elected to Parliament as a

14. Cf. C. Ysmal, "La Crise Électorale de l'UDF and du RPR," in *Revue Française de Science Politique*, No. 6 (1990).

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member of the *Poujadiste* movement.[15] With the founding of the National Front he sought to regroup the "national, social and popular" Right[16] — a variety of different people, from those nostalgic of the Vichy regime, to those opposed to Algerian independence, to the youth of the New Right born in 1968, to the national Catholic fundamentalists still identifying with Charles Maurras' *Action Française*.

At the beginning, the Front underwent various splits, losing in the process its most extreme right-wing elements.[17] For many years its electoral results were insignificant. In the 1978 legislative elections the Front received only .76% of the vote and in 1981 Le Pen even failed to gather the 500 signatures needed to sponsor his own presidential candidacy. In the legislative election that same year he received only 0.18% of the vote. The qualitative leap came in March 1983, when he received 11.3% of the vote in Paris' 20th *arrondissement*. In September the National Front obtained 16.7% of the vote in Dreux, finally attracting national attention. From then on its success spread over the whole country. In the 1984 European elections its average support was 11.1%, with a maximum of 16.9% in the South. By the 1988 presidential election Le Pen was able to garner 14% of the vote nationally, and 22.9% in the South.

Where did these votes come from? According to a study of those who voted for Le Pen in 1984, 18% were people who had hitherto voted for Chirac's RPR, 12% from ex-supporters of Giscard D'Estaing's UDF, 6% from Mitterands' Socialist Party and 2% from Marchais' Communist Party. It was an electorate coming predominantly from Center-Right parties, but also including former members of the Left.

After 1984 the National Front's electorate changed. A study conducted in the Parisian area to establish its source of support showed that the party had altered its profile after initial electoral successes: "Between 1984 and 1988 support for Jean-Marie Le Pen changed. From bourgeois, it

15. Organized by the shop-keeper Pierre Poujade, this movement became part of the anti-tax revolt (supported especially by small businessmen and artisans), fought public corruption, and developed an anti-parliament critique while exhibiting, directly or indirectly, anti-Semitic tendencies. The *Poujadiste* movement, within the context of the crisis of the Fourth Republic, anticipated the neo-populism of the 1980s. After receiving over two million votes (9.2%) in the 1956 elections, it dissipated shortly afterwards because of internal conflicts.

16. The symbol of the National Front is similar to that of the MSI (Movimento Sociale Italiano — the rightist party which succeeded fascism); many of its themes are reminiscent of those of the old *Parti Populiste Français* of Jacques Doriot (an ex-communist worker who, during the Nazi occupation, embraced National-Socialist positions).

17. Cf. M. Charlot, "L'Émergence du Front National," in *Revue Française de Science Politique*, No. 36, 1986.

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became popular, from 'extreme Right' it became a protest electorate."[18] A series of national studies have confirmed this evolution. In 1987 only 12% of Le Pen's potential electorate indicated sympathy for the UDR-RPR, against 39% in 1984. Similarly, support for the National Front among the working class went from 9% in 1984 to 19% in 1988. During the same period, the support of the petty bourgeois (i.e., businessmen and artisans) increased from 15% to 27%. As Jaffré put it: "The all too real façade of immigration hides the drama of unemployment and the consequences of the crisis that exacerbate the reactions of part of the popular electorate disoriented by the politicians' impotence, from both the Left and the Right, to deal with its problems."[19]

The kernel of Le Pen's political message was immigration, which he connected to unemployment and lack of safety: "The National Front relates these three terms (immigration, unemployment and lack of safety) and at the same time presents itself as the only entity able to solve *the* problem."[20] Of course, Le Pen condemned all forms of racism "including anti-French racism."[21] Allegedly, it was simply a matter of preventing immigration from penalizing the poorest Frenchmen and from "threatening national cultural identity." It only meant a privileging of French nationals in employment and social security (*"les Français d'abord"*), and of sending immigrants back to their countries of origin. Accordingly, "Le Pen's account is essentially a spoken one, impoverished and often negative. He does not analyze, but only asserts and denounces."[22] The message is systematically and repetitively aimed at what are considered the cornerstones of the system of French representation: 1) the institutions of the Fifth Republic; 2) the "gang of four" (the four main French parties: the Socialist, the Communist, the RPR and the UDF); and 3) the "four superpowers governing France" (the Jews, the Masons, the Protestants and the Marxists). Le Pen's other main themes concern the reduction of the state's role to social control and defense, the "de-statization" of France, support for free enterprise, and the reestablishment of the traditional moral order, emphasizing the family and condemning abortion and homosexuality.

What allowed the broadening of Le Pen's support was the ability to combine rigidity and repetitiveness (with respect to the key stereotypes

18. N. Mayer, "De Passy à Barbès: deux Visage du Vote Le Pen à Paris," in *Revue Française de Science Politique*, no. 37, 1987.
19. In *Le Monde* (May 26, 1987).
20. Birgitta Orfali, *L'Adhésion au Front National* (Paris Editions Kimé, 1990).
21. Interview in "Europe 1" (February 3, 1987).
22. Charlot, *op. cit.*

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and in opposition to traditional parties and political institutions) with a relative flexibility and pragmatic sense in addressing the "common people." This shift was facilitated by the sympathy shown for the National Front by some entertainment and sport figures and by the "conversion" of some former officials of the traditional parties. The media also unwittingly contributed to the National Front's success: by attacking Le Pen they inflated his relevance and cast him as an important political figure. Thus, after 1984, the themes forcefully emphasized by the National Front (immigration, safety, the defense of the traditional moral order) have been taken up by other political forces, broadening the acceptability of Le Pen's message within otherwise apolitical sectors.

The Lombard League-Northern League's Regional Populism

The political and cultural origins of the Lombard Leagues are completely different from those of the National Front. For the Lombard League's founding members the initial objective was regional federalism. The small group of "Lombard autonomists" sought to transform the geographical-administrative referent (the Lombard region) into a political locus defining particular interests. The kernel of the League's official doctrine was clearly stated in the very first issue of *Lombardia Autonomista* (March 1982): "Your age does not matter, nor does your occupation, nor your political preferences: what is important is that you, or rather *we*, are all Lombard." To the interchangeability and increasing meaninglessness of the traditional parties' programs the League contraposed defense of specific regional interests.

At least up to 1987 the League developed according to a pattern very similar to that of other federal-regionalist movements that have emerged elsewhere in Northern Italy.[23] The outlook was clearly federal autonomism. The League came into being, gathered strength, and became "visible" for the first time within such a context. During this phase, support did not rise above a certain threshold. It was even weaker than that of other Italian regional Leagues. In 1987 the Lombard League only managed to reach 3%, mostly in some of Lombardy's peripheral provinces, with little support in Milan's metropolitan area, compared to 4.3% for the Piedmont regionalist movements.

During the first half of the 1980s in Lombardy, "regional belonging"

23. Other Leagues founded in Veneto or Piedmont were characterized by their defense of various aspects of culture, traditions and regional dialects, and have received a considerable number of votes without, however, ever becoming politically significant at a national level.

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was not sufficient to constitute "spontaneously" a base for a new political movement. There was no autonomous Lombard culture grounded on a specific language and particular traditions. Local dialects were spoken only in peripheral areas, and varied from place to place. Often they were closer to the dialects of bordering regions than to those of other areas of Lombardy. Similarly, ancient local traditions had survived only in few sub-alpine valleys. The attempt to constitute a collective identity initially led the Lombard autonomists to emphasize the Lombard dialect by means of "provocatory" interventions in representative institutions. This strategy, however, tended to degrade autonomism to an expression of "local folklore" and, most of all, seemed irrelevant to most Lombards.

As a result, Umberto Bossi and his collaborators began to emphasize *another type of break* with the official national language. In opposition to the convoluted jargon with which politicians and intellectuals describe social and political events, they pointed to a *second language* informally elaborated in various subcultural contexts. This made it possible to exploit popular resentment against the political and intellectual castes' expropriation of power and language, thus paving the way for the "populist" turn. Autonomist vindications became broadened and transformed so as to express the "common people's" resentment against the political caste. The anti-tax rebellion — something felt particularly by the autonomous petty bourgeoisie and typical of most populist movements — became one of the trademarks of the protest against the central government in Rome.[24] As such, the League reappropriated a tendency that had emerged already after WWII during various clashes between the party-system and "the common people": a tendency privileging private activity and social order against the debilitating impact of politics.

Subsequently, the League deployed another typical populist theme: hostility towards "those who are different," i.e., towards those who threaten the people's homogeneity, and therefore its very identity. It encouraged regional belonging within the context of already existing latent antagonisms. In fact, the League's first successful mobilizing efforts were in connection with clashes between Lombards and immigrants (first Southerners and subsequently the extra-communitarians). By the late 1980s the visibility of Third World immigrants in Italy had grown considerably and traditional anti-Southern hostility gradually

24. During this phase the most successful slogans were "The League does not forgive a stealing Rome!" ("*Roma ladrona la Lega non perdona!*"), and the self-deprecating statement: "Pay, you Lombard jackass!"

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gave way to hostility towards extra-communitarian immigrants.[25]

Various studies conducted in Lombardy during the 1980s have documented the extent to which latent hostilities were widespread, but relatively undifferentiated among the population: the tension between "the common people" and deviants (from criminals to anyone failing to become integrated within "popular" norms and customs), the tension between citizens and the political caste, and between citizens and the new immigrants. The League succeeded in presenting these three conflicting scenarios as at least partially overlapping, and itself as the agency able to deal with them. Consequently, its political model was a combination of regionalism and populism — a very effective model which, within the Italian context, vindicated the values of hard work and efficiency identified with the Lombards' private initiative, in contraposition to the notorious shortcomings of the state apparatus. This resulted in a general assumption that a vote for the League expressed a revolt by the "healthy" parts of society against the political system.

The originality of the League's "regionalist populism" consists in combining common people's representational needs, no longer met by traditional political institutions, and a community defined in historical and territorial terms. The need for political identification is partially filled by the "Lombard nation" as a "strong" community aware of its interests and able to defend them. The League interprets the political crisis through the contraposition of Lombardy to Rome, which effectively symbolizes existing tensions between the common people and the party system. Thus a vote for the League comes to represent an immediate punitive popular pronouncement against the *partitocracy*.

The Lombard League's first Congress in 1989 prefigured the shift from federal autonomism to regional populism: the abandonment of the emphasis on dialects; the shift from the anti-Southern polemic to that against extra-communitarians; and the broadening of the concept of the Lombard people to encompass all sub-alpine regions of Northern Italy as a "multi-regional community sharing the same culture." As a result of this populist turn, support for the League grew rapidly, well beyond that for other regional formations, reaching 8% of the vote in the 1989 European elections and 19% in the 1990 regional elections.

On the strength of this success, the Lombard League has been able

25. Vimercati points out that "with 1990 the Lombard League unleashed what has now become its battlecry: the rejection of uncontrolled immigration. . . As time goes on, the number of those who turn to the 'Lumbard' for help against the 'Black invasion' is growing." Cf. Daniele Vimercati, *I Lombardi alla Nuova Crociata* (Milan: Mursia, 1990).

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to "export" its own regional populism to other Italian regions. With the founding of the Northern League in 1991, it is no longer concerned with the autonomy of individual regions, but with a "Northern Republic" comprising Tuscany and other Italian regions.[26] Thus the Northern League has promoted other Leagues in the Center and South of Italy. The main objective has changed: the movement's focus is no longer primarily regional autonomy but political hegemony at a national level. The division of Italy into three great autonomous subnations is meant to ratify — under the auspices of the "powerful" League — the inevitable centrality of Northern Italy, not only economically and culturally but also politically. In the April 5, 1992 elections the Northern League was represented in all Italian regions.

Two Neo-Populist Models?

Today the French National Front and the Italian Northern League constitute, respectively, the most clear-cut expressions of national-populism and populist regionalism in Europe. Because of different national contexts and outlook, there are profound differences between them. Their initial successes were recorded in areas most responsive to their respective original doctrines: for the National Front, among those voters dissatisfied with the politics of the moderate Right, and for the League, among the electorate of some peripheral provinces of Lombardy. In the course of their growth, however, both movements have rediscovered and reinterpreted *all* the fundamental elements of the populist model by adapting them to their respective contexts.

A) Both movements present themselves as the defenders of the "common people" against various elites (big politics, big government, big business, journalists and intellectuals). The cultural model advocated is that of small industrial and artisan enterprises embodying the virtues of hard work, frugality, honesty and the entrepreneurship of the common people. Existing political parties are criticized for lacking any effective programs to tackle the various problems worrying the population. Worse yet, the suspicion lingers that in many cases the dominant elites are in collusion with the very sources of the problem. Here undifferentiated fear tends to translate into a "conspiratorial theory": the collusion of various "enemies" at the expense of the overwhelming

26. According to Bossi, the projected autonomy should be predicated on three great "Republics," and not on individual regions. The coexistence of the original League project (federal regionalism) within the Northern League raises a number of problems.

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majority of the population and their representatives.[27]

B) There is nothing subversive about the critique of the existing systems of representation (the traditional parties as well as other political institutions). Accordingly, the alternative to the existing system can be developed through the electoral process.[28] This alternative is thus prefigured in the new political organizations where adherence to the cause translates into loyalty to the political organization and the leader. Thus it is Le Pen who promises to return "France to the French," while League militants are asked to swear loyalty to and defend the interests of the people of the "Po Valley," the League, and its leaders. Disagreement with the leader is inadmissible: where it develops, it immediately turns into an organizational break, with the expulsion of dissidents invariably accused of being part of a plot and in the "enemy's pay." The League tries to relate to the electorate by allowing a form of "belonging without participation" with a maximum delegation of power to the leaders on the basis of their identification with the "people" (French or North Italian) and a minimum of input of personal opinions. The only thing the League requests is material adherence and/or support: everything else follows. The emphasis is on the role of "militants as loyal executors." Its current self-definition is "a party of *attacchini* (those who hang announcements on walls)." Similarly, the National Front claims that "militants owe everything to the party while the party owes nothing to them." Although federalism has historically advocated decentralization, within the Northern League all local decisions are always inspired and carefully monitored by Bossi himself.[29]

C) In both the League and the Front the "people" has a national-territorial reference. In both they combine particular issues (usually systemic problems) with possible solutions in terms of a strong, territorially based community. Thus Le Pen combines the "return of France to the French" with problems of immigration, lack of safety and unemployment. For the League the national-territorial dimension (the "Lombard people" and, subsequently, the "people of the Po Valley" is

27. There are many examples: Bossi claims that the "head" of the Mafia operates within the Christian Democratic Party: both the Front and the League accuse industrial and political sectors of favoring immigration for electoral and speculative reasons.

28. On the occasion of the referendum concerning the modification of the system of preferences of June 1991, Bossi asked the electors to abstain, arguing that the only meaningful vote was for the League.

29. Even in local elections there have been many clashes concerning candidates between local representatives and the League's national leadership. The latter's positions have always prevailed, even at the cost of serious breaks.

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the most important social and political identity.[30] The founding of the "Northern Republic" and the threat to call a "constituent assembly" of League parliamentarians elected in the northern regions prefigures the historical joining of nation and state. The League's sub-nationalism seems to substitute for the nationalist ideology which, in other countries, is an essential component of populist politics. The success of the Front and the League shows how the delegitimation of the welfare state leads broad sectors of the population to emphasize a strong community defined in national-territorial terms as the indispensible basis for a concrete alternative.

D) Hostility towards "immigrants" has played an essential role for both the League and the Front, even if managed differently because of national and ideological differences. Obviously there is no racism based on traditional biological theories. Instead, this hostility takes the form of a kind of common sense xenophobia predicated mainly on the "negative practical consequences" resulting from the presence of a large number of immigrants: rising criminality and unemployment, social degradation and the spread of new diseases. This renders the League's and the Front's political analyses all the more convincing: the presence of "foreigners" threatens the people's internal unity and identity[31] understood not solely as a past to be reactivated but as "an idealized community to be defended."[32] At any rate, although rather different, national-populism and regional populism are two variants of a political model gaining increasing currency in Europe.[33]

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30. Many commentators have erroneously underestimated the League's vindication of the "nation," first to Lombardy and then to other regions, as well as the efforts to emphasize its historical, linguistic and cultural bases, i.e., the "mentality" of the Lombards and of "the people of the Po Valley."

31. To justify proposals to slow down immigration, Roberto Ronchi, the League's expert on the matter, claims that "a multi-racial society produces a break of the equilibria necessary to human beings, compromises its natural need for collective identity thus resulting in social disintegration." Quoted in Vimercati, *op. cit.*

32. Cf. M. A. Confalonieri, "L'Altra Faccia dell'Europa: Varietà di Populismi Xenofobi," in *Ulisse*, No. 6, 1991.

33. During this past year the existence of this political space has led the MSI (*Movimento Sociale Italiano*), in the wake of its decline in the 1990 elections, to follow the national-populist path. Under Fini's leadership, and within the context of the attacks that the President of the Republic, Cossiga, has unleashed against the traditional parties, the MSI is attempting to follow the populist model. Notwithstanding profound differences with the Northern League concerning national unity, the two parties have often found themselves together, especially in the mobilization of the base against the presence of immigrants and in the violent polemic against the *partitocracy*. Yet the MSI is unlikely to succeed in this project because of the lingering connection in Italian public opinion with the defeated fascist regime.

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The Making of the Lombard League

Carlo E. Ruzza and Oliver Schmidtke

Reaching directory assistance in Italy is often impossible. It is always busy and people frequently give up in frustration. The poor condition of the phone service — a state monopoly — is no exception. All public services are in near collapse. The life of the Italian citizen is plagued by frequent encounters with a byzantine bureaucracy. Obtaining a duplicate driver's license might take years; a building permit often requires substantial bribes to hasten its arrival. Public transportation, the postal system, the public health system, municipal offices and most other services are utterly inadequate. Political corruption is the counterpart of this situation. It is connected with the problem of *partitocrazia*: the dominance of political parties over the state and their channeling of public resources to their clients. But now in the northern part of the country these grievances have found a new political voice: the Leagues, the strongest of which is the rapidly growing Lombard League.

Founded in 1982, the Lombard League exemplifies the renewed political importance of regional movements. It went from 2.5% of regional votes in 1985 to 19% in 1991 when it won a plurality in the city of Brescia (where it reached 24%). This is a remarkable development in a system characterized by only a few percentage points of variation between elections. Considering that the whole political establishment is strongly opposed to the League, it is surprising that such support could be mobilized. The answer must be sought in the way the League has articulated themes of general public discontent.

While attracting people who value pragmatism and moderation, the League has refused to participate in government, preferring to oppose

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the system, even at the cost of wasting the vote of its electorate. Nevertheless, it has succeeded in mobilizing people living in small villages who had never taken part in protest politics. Recent Italian movements often share a common culture as well as activists and material resources. The League, however, has created a viable social movement *ex nihilo*. While several previous movements found legitimacy in existing political or religious institutions, the League has defined itself as the enemy of them all. The media describes its activists as "an army of uneducated villagers challenging the Italian intelligentsia."

Along with other ethnic movements in Europe, the League advocates cultural, economic and political self-determination. Unlike them, however, it does not appeal to a feeling of protest against long-standing foreign rule.[1] Instead, the problem of unsatisfactory public services and political corruption is explained in terms of a destruction of the values of work identified with the Lombard community. Here the culprits are the Southerners, whose particular culture and lack of a work ethic allegedly has colonized the Italian state and its political parties. Many Lombards feel part of a "middle-European" culture. They are proud of their economic success and feel exploited by the South. More recently the threat has been broadened to include extra-communitarian immigrants (i.e., those originating outside the European community, specifically Africa and Maghreb).

Surprised by the League's success, the Italian political establishment has tried to explain the phenomenon. Newspaper articles, television talk shows and books have focused on a number of recurring interpretations. The prevalent attitude is dismissive. They usually emphasize the League's regressive aspects such as "racism" and "egoism."[2] These alarmed reactions are often tempered by forecasts that it is only a passing fad. The League is thus seen as the wrong answer to real questions concerning the general collapse of the Italian state, i.e., a moral, political, economic and organizational failure. This, however, does not explain either the extraordinary anger and ostracism the League has generated or its success in a culture hitherto characterized by ideological diversity and political coexistence. The League's challenge is part of a

1. Joseph R. Rudolph and Robert J. Thompson, Jr., "Ethnoterritorial Movements and the Policy Process," in *Comparative Politics* (April 1985), p. 291-311.

2. The League vigorously rejects accusations of racism. As its leader, Umberto Bossi, put it: what the League is really against is "the state, authoritarianism and the domination of the centers of power. Therefore we cannot be racist." Cf. "Ora sì, Vogliamo il Governo," interview with Fiamma Nirenstein in *L'Indipendente* (December 6, 1991), p. 3.

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wider decentralizing trend. More broadly, regionalist movements of this type must be seen against the background of the decline of the nation-state. Far from being a mere obstacle to an irresistible process of modernization or the expression of provincialism, this new regionalism may be a promising response to the shortcomings of the nation-state.[3]

The League's success is due to two main factors. First, it has managed to articulate widespread but hitherto dispersed themes of popular dissatisfaction, such as vehement indignation about political corruption and the inefficiency of public services. Second, it has identified and politicized previously dormant social sectors. Its electoral success is predicated on an activism rooted in newly forged cultural identities. In other words, the emergence of the League is related to the debut of new communities with distinct collective identities. What is needed is an analysis of its symbolic representation since the League's effective symbolism has manufactured a new Lombard identity.

The theory of mass society[4] argues that social integration discourages widespread political participation.[5] Accordingly, only those citizens either weakly integrated into a community or not integrated at all are likely to participate in mass movements. Exactly the contrary is claimed by the resource mobilization perspective, according to which integration into social networks increases the likelihood of political mobilization. Accordingly, individuals can be mobilized around shared values and symbols only if they are already part of some group. It is personal relations and group interaction which make citizens act according to shared common goals.[6] In the case of the Lombard League it is impossible to discuss community integration independently of political participation, since the League itself was a driving force in the development of groups sensitive to the goals of regionalism. Such groups did not exist before the rise of the League but were created in the process of constituting the movement. Especially in the formative stages, these political activists did not have an organizational apparatus able to attract

3. For an interesting discussion of this crisis and a comparison of European states with the situation in England, see Jonathan Clark, "Sovereignty: the British Experience," in *Times Literary Supplement* (November 29, 1991), p. 145-46.

4. William Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society* (New York: The Free Press, 1959).

5. Cf. Karl-Dieter Opp, "Community Integration and Incentives for Political Protest," in *International Social Movement Research*, Vol. 1 (1988), pp. 83-101. Cf. also Dirk Gerdes, *Regionalismus als soziale Bewegung* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 1985).

6. See Bert Useem, "Solidarity Model, Breakdown Model, and the Boston Anti-busing Movement," in *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 45 (1980), pp. 357-69; and Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

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the media coverage necessary to popularize their views. Therefore, they depended on successful strategies to spread their message.[7] On the whole, the resource mobilization approach sees political action as guided mainly by strategic considerations, while the new movements school emphasizes the constitution of identity. Both processes seem to be at work within the League.

Collective action relies on symbols to shape the movement's solidarity, even if the people engaged in it never meet. Thus a march is a display of people; their physical presence expresses their motivation and their number emphasizes their "right." It has a legitimacy similar to that of the electoral process, which is also based on the strength of numbers.[8] A flag similarly expresses sanctity, independence and power. Social movements always use symbols. Their meaning is established by the cultural content and by the situation in which they are employed, i.e., the expected reaction of other activists, onlookers, the authorities and the press. The League has learned well the lesson of the 1980s movements. It has adopted prolific symbolism to create a new identity and has deployed a considerable amount of symbolism in various demonstrations to maximize media visibility.

The Emergence of Grievances

An examination of several media sources reveals a relevant congruence between grievances identified by the media and those attacked by the League:[9]

1) *Political Corruption*. There is a shady market for votes as well as all sorts of benefits. Politicians engage in a lucrative commerce of state resources, sometimes with organized crime, particularly the Mafia in

7. See Bert Klandermans, "The Formation and Mobilization of Consensus," in Bert Klandermans, Hanspeter Kriesi and Sidney Tarrow, eds., *From Structure to Action: Comparing Social Movement Research Across Cultures* (London: Jai Press, 1988), pp. 173-96; and W. A. Gamson "Political Discourse and Collective Action." in Klandermans et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 219-244. Similarly, Freeman considers the desire to "spread the message of the movement" as one of the defining characteristics of social movements. See Joseph Freeman, ed., *Social Movements of the Sixties and Seventies* (New York: Longman, 1983).

8. Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading MA: Addison-Wesley, 1978).

9. See Piero Ottone, "Se Nasce Davvero la League Nazionale," in *La Repubblica* (December 7, 1991), p. 1. Ottone was the editor of *Corriere della Sera*, one of Italy's most influential newspapers. Similarly Feltri, a columnist for *Europeo*, writes "The Leagues have been ridiculed by national television and by private television channels; they have been 'flunked' by the quality press which accused them of every possible iniquity. They have been snubbed by the 'barons' of politics. Yet they have been successful in the face of traditional parties." Cf. Vittorio Feltri, "Due Parole fra Noi," in *L'Europeo* (December 20, 1991), p. 5.

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Sicily, the Camorra in Naples and the N'drangheta in Calabria.

2) *Inefficient Political System*. Political decision-making is based on a byzantine bureaucracy and a constant search for compromises. This produces frequent stalemates and an inadequate representation of voters' will. There is a fundamental difference between the way institutions are supposed to work and the way they really work, which is extremely undemocratic.

3) *Large Regional Differences between North and South*. Many attempts have been made to unify the country, but everything done so far has been unsuccessful and often counterproductive.

4) *Inadequate Public Services*. Personnel are careless, incompetent and narrow-minded in a peculiarly bureaucratic way.

5) *Waste of Public Resources*. An astounding proportion of national resources is dissipated by poor management and the perverse need of the political system to perpetuate itself through the financing of useless public projects.

6) *Immigration*. On this topic the media's attitude has changed over time. When immigrants began to arrive in Italy in large numbers, the media stressed that their presence would benefit Italy by introducing needed diversity in Italian culture. Cases of intolerance were forcefully stigmatized. Nevertheless, the view gradually emerged that immigration was a problem. Ever more frequently the media pointed out that there was a moral duty to help those new immigrants who lived in an appalling state of poverty, unsanitary conditions and shameful economic exploitation. Failure to address this problem is creating increasing social tensions. The solution proposed by the League — limiting the number of immigrants — appeals to significant sectors of the electorate.

There seems to be a direct link between the timing of the League's success and the progressive increase of media emphasis on the themes stressed by the League. Even if its successes were condemned as a dangerous manifestation of racist and irresponsible attitudes, the objective convergence between media grievances and the League's program did not escape the voters' notice. Similarly, during the last few years the League's growth corresponds to a general increase in media references to rising crime rates in the South and political corruption. This emphasis has certainly had a favorable impact on the League, which has consistently claimed to be able to provide solutions to these problems.

The Left has also called repeatedly for a "moralization of public life" and "good administration." Leftist regions are known to be better governed, enjoying more efficient services and having few politicians accused of political corruption. Despite all this, the League and not the

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organizationally and culturally more powerful Left has been successful in attracting the votes of a disgruntled public. This can be explained by its successful political strategies, a more attractive political program, and the general collapse of the Left. Thanks to its ability to reinterpret what were perceived as intractable national problems in terms of an easy contraposition of North and South, the League has achieved massive electoral gains.

Mobilization Dynamics

Some general demographic considerations[10] may help clarify the issue of mobilization. Most League activists are involved in their first militant experience. They are generally young (18-25). Some have a high school diploma, but most have attended only junior high school. Often they begin working at the age of 15, and are comparatively wealthier than their student peers. The League's activists generally come from small villages. Thus they are likely to know one another. Yet the vast majority of the activists interviewed were not acquainted with each other before joining the League. Activism created the context of their friendship.

All these characteristics intimate a culturally homogenous movement, but in many respects an unusual one. As a recent study has shown, there are more young working class people in the League than there were in the Communist Party or its successor, the Party of the Left (P.d.S.). Since the League is strong in traditionally non-leftist areas, the crisis of Marxism should not be seen as a possible explanation of the new activism. Similarly, it cannot be explained in terms of a new political space opening on the Right after it was no longer necessary to oppose Marxism. In electoral terms it could be argued that, freed from the threat of communism, Christian Democratic voters feel less reluctant to punish their party for the obvious problems of political corruption and institutional chaos. This may explain the League's votes, but not the League's activism. As is often pointed out, the League's vote is largely a protest. Yet, even in the context of existing social movements, this does not explain activism, since traditional right-wing activists come from a radically different background: urban settings and from the upper class or underclass.

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10. See "E Cipputi Salí sul Carroccio," in *Corriere della Sera* (December 10, 1991). A demographic profile of activists is also available in *Localismo Politico: Il caso Lega Lombarda*, a study commissioned by the "Comitato Regionale Lombardo Democrazia Cristiana" and conducted in Spring 1989 by Vincenzo Cesareo and Giancarlo Rovati (Published by La tipografica Varese, Via Tonale 49, Varese).

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The labor movement grew in large and medium-size factories. The student movement, the New Left, feminism and pacifism developed in schools. Right-wing counter-movements have always remained very small, and have also been based in schools. The members of the League do not come from pre-existing institutional settings in workplaces and schools. Rather, the League appeals to informal groups of friends or seeks to form networks by bringing together people who might superficially know each other because of the small size of their communities. As several personal interviews showed, the League recruits entire circles, or people who hardly know one another.[11] Thus it takes on the role of a socializing agent for peer groups. To those who do not meet in schools or factories, the League offers a sense of group identity based on territorial belonging. To understand the need for a socializing agent it is necessary to consider the crisis of large industries and of villages as social systems.

The Crisis of the Village

Unlike France or Britain, in Italy the population lives mostly in small villages and towns. The village as a social system was traditionally based on a set of age and gender specific meeting places. These included the parish hall and food stores for adult women, the tavern for adult men, and Catholic clubs and sport activities for adolescents. The leftist "*Case del Popolo*" (People's Houses) were also socializing venue and workplaces providing additional meeting opportunities. Recently, however, cultural, political and economic forces have resulted in a decline of meeting opportunities. Since the 1970s many factories in Northern Italy were closed and replaced with a network of cottage industries and family-size workshops. This was facilitated by technological innovation and was a reaction to successful unionization in factories, rising labor costs, and a taxation system which draws an unfair proportion of resources from medium and large productive units. A new system of dispersed workplaces emerged as a successful economic innovation,

11. For instance, Bellotti reports in *Corriere della Sera*: "Recruitment and propaganda methods remain alternative [to traditional politics]. They are to a large degree based on informal connections. They attract new members from bowling halls, bars, parishes, video arcades, even stadiums. The activists of senator Bossi have a pervasive presence comparable to the golden age of the Italian Communist Party." Similarly, the League proselytizes in soccer clubs. Activists go to stadiums on Sundays and set up discussion tables. For many people the League becomes something visible, a presence to be reckoned with. See "Ai Giovani Piace la Lega. Intolleranti Verso il Sud," in *Corriere della Sera* (December 11, 1991).

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which threatened the workers' collective identity within larger work units and undermined the sense of community typical of small towns. Secularization similarly reduced the socializing role played by Catholic associations and changing lifestyles connected to the decline of the extended family contributed to the disruption of local communities.

Massive migrations from the South were also felt as a menace in traditionally stable village communities. However, there seems to be no direct link between immigration and support for the League. The most supportive communities are not those with the highest rates of immigration but those that feel more threatened because of their isolation.[12] Well-integrated communities are already multi-cultural and socially mobile. In places such as Milan support for the League comes late and on a lower level. The League provides a solution to the crisis of the village as a social system. It offers a unifying ideological element and a socializing activity (activism) as well as a variety of recreational activities.

The League's activists share a common ideological outlook centered on a Lombard identity, i.e., honest hard work as a moral duty and as a prized personal inclination. It extends to an appreciation of "facts rather than words" and a distrust for career politicians, their convoluted language and corrupted morals. The individual elements of this outlook have been present in Italian popular consciousness for some time and have been abundantly reflected by the media. Lombard identity, however, is new.

Until recently most people who grew up in Lombardy were not too concerned with being Lombards or even aware of it. For instance, one might have felt Milanese, since there is still a strong localist tradition sustained by a distinctive dialect and an indigenous literature. But Lombardy was not even mentioned in traditional localist subcultures. At most there was a distinction between undifferentiated "Northerners" and "Southerners." Lombardy is the ingenious creation of the Lombard League. Through it the League was able to overcome narrow localism and present itself as the herald of a shared heritage and the expression of a broader social movement. Ethnic identities tend to appear timeless, even if they have been minted yesterday.[13] The Lombard League profited from this. But why was the League successful in convincing people that there was such a thing as a "Lombard"?

12. See Renato Mannheimer, ed., *La Lega Lombarda* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1991).
13. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983).

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The League's Language

There have been some changes in the League's self-image. Early on it favored local dialects. Redefined as "the language of the Lombard Nation," the dialect was able to draw clear boundaries. At night activists used to rewrite street signs in dialect, creating occasional problems for non-natives. It was also a convenient way of gaining exposure without having to provide specific political programs. Since Lombard dialects generally drop the last vowel from standard Italian, to make a political statement it was sufficient to efface with spray paint a single letter from street signs. But over-reliance on dialect proved counterproductive. Many educated young people do not master it, and dialects vary significantly in small areas. There was a risk of creating divisions within the movement rather than enhancing solidarity. In addition, the dialect had an alienating effect on those potential members who had at least one Southern parent but were born in the North. This problem became more serious after the League decided to become allied with other Northern Leagues to create a larger political unit called League Nord. Furthermore, the emphasis on dialect appeared too parochial and lent itself to ridicule. It has been replaced by metaphors, catch-phrases and commonplaces taken from everyday language and politically reinterpreted such as: "The League cleans the engine (of politics)." It is a simple message taken directly from advertising and expressed in ordinary language.

To appreciate this, one has to consider that over the years Italian politicians have developed an extremely convoluted and baroque political jargon. It sounds obscure to most Italians and it presupposes an insider's knowledge of political affairs and the ability to "read between the lines." Presenting itself as an opposition movement, the League has chosen a language which, according to one of the activists, seeks to bring politics "down to the level of common people." At the risk of sounding vulgar, it manages to demystify politics.[14] The choice of vulgar language complements the use of simple and at times clearly

14. One of the League's most popular slogans is a simple claim of masculine sexual prowess. It is used as a disingenuous reaction to complicated comments by political opponents. It does not make sense, but it creates embarrassment and anger in political circles. Similarly, it triggers elation among activists and conveys the League's oppositional character. Vulgarity becomes a virtue because it displays a simplicity and directness lacking elsewhere. This appeal, however, is similar to that of some of the new social movements in the early 1980s. To complicated and unconvincing speeches by political opponents, New Left activists used to react by chanting "*scemo, scemo*" (scatterbrained, scatterbrained) in a tone children use to tease each other.

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incorrect syntactic structures which seem to be literal translations from dialect. It is meant as a statement about the personal background of the League's voters — an electorate including wealthy artisans, small businessmen and shopkeepers. Thus it has the same effect as using the dialect, without the previously discussed shortcomings. It allows a simplification of complicated problems and offers an opportunity for activists with little education to participate.

The League's Politics

In the Lombard League the political party and the social movement coexist without any problems, combining an emphasis on electoral achievements with practices typical of social movements. Frequent and often theatrical demonstrations and a constant effort to "mobilize" go together with the reiterated desire to govern Lombardy. Flags, medieval armors and songs are used extensively to emphasize the Lombards' heritage. Activism is encouraged and solidarity enhanced through rituals. There are anthems, oath ceremonies, and high sounding rhetorical use of words such as "destiny." Everything is brand new, but it is readily accepted as traditional by activists.

Above and beyond all this, however, the fact remains that the League's objectives are incompatible with the existing political system. It advocates the dissolution of the Italian state. It assumes the role of a social movement understood as a political agency lacking the means to participate effectively in the decision-making process. This warrants and justifies unconventional or disruptive activities. Thus the League relies extensively on theatrical actions to constitute a generalized Lombard identity and political statehood by giving expression to a public protest against an allegedly unacceptable domination by "corrupt" parties ignorant of regional needs. It establishes its political presence by emphasizing its distinct character, contrary to the "rules of the game" defined by traditional parties (the agencies of the centralized state).

The League's politics are not limited to electoral contests. It seeks to create the kind of "we-feeling" that characterizes the mobilizing activities of most recent social movements: expressive action forms, undefined organizational structures and irregular militancy patterns. Even if its eventual integration into the existing political system is a possibility, at present the League is more the vehicle of collective protest than a party with a clear-cut program. Judging from the reaction of traditional parties and the media, the League's challenge to conventional politics has managed to upset considerably the political establishment. Both Left and

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Right react violently to the accusations that the traditional party system is unable to represent adequately the needs of the people in the region.

As the political rejection of the centralized domination of Rome and as an expression of attempts to constitute a regional identity *vis à vis* the Italian nation-state, the League is part of a much broader movement for political and cultural self-determination. It is a movement which includes many other Leagues, of which the Lombard is only the most successful. Leagues are emerging in several Italian regions, and even those Leagues which had been declining, such as the Veneto League, seem to be regaining acceptance, riding on the success of the Lombard League. Recent quarrels within the Lombard League are typical of the difficulties which necessarily result when one organization or even one person claims leadership in a social movement.[15] As with other new movements, organizational structures are not formalized, but anti-authoritarian principles stressed by other recent social movements are defeated in the League by a reliance on the charisma of its leader, Umberto Bossi. He holds all power and uses it effectively to silence and even purge dissenters. This has resulted in several short-lived splinter groups, while contributing to a relatively high cohesion during critical times. As is usually the case with new social movements, the Lombard League lacks a clear political identity. This open process of identity formation has to be seen in the context of the League's rise and in relation to the intentions of the League's supporters.

Decentralization and the Decline of the Nation-State

The rise of the Lombard League is closely related to the decline of the nation-state. Transnational political and economic organizations are increasingly taking over those functions originally performed by nation-states. The forthcoming unification of Western Europe is only the most important and visible milestone in a process which is draining the nation-state of its classic functions: protection against foreign enemies and the articulation of a national economic unit. Similarly, there are new opportunities for regional forces to gain influence over the future development of the political units they represent. Lombardy is particularly qualified to take advantage of these developments. Financially it

15. As in all other new movements, within the League there is a debate concerning organizational structure. While Bossi prefers a loosely structured organization, others favor more "internal organization." See "Continua la Grande Fuga dalla League Lombarda," in *La Republica* (November 23, 1991), p. 5. These controversies go to the very essence of the League's political project: whether it should become a regular party or remain a social movement.

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is the most successful region in Italy.[16] The League portrays Lombardy as a region deprived of what it is supposedly entitled to by a wasteful political and economic national system.

Corresponding to this loss of political functions, European nation-states confront a significant change in the loyalty their citizens are willing to grant them.[17] This does not necessarily result in the disappearance of all forms of nationalism in the sense of an attachment and a feeling of belonging to a territory, as suggested by modernization theory. The global trend toward an enhanced differentiation within the nation-state implies that under certain political conditions a new kind of regionalism can develop. As in the case of the Lombard League, new regional identities can be created and become driving political forces.[18] In this sense, the League represents a regional mobilization against the anonymous state apparatus.

Against the background of the decline of the nation-state and the corresponding disintegration of rural community life, the recourse to the region as the decisive unit expresses a rational response to the challenges of the present. It meets the need for communal belonging which neither the nation-state nor disrupted contemporary rural life can easily provide. If political participation is a function of weighing returns and satisfaction against the costs associated with this kind of activity, being active on behalf of the League and of the regional community it stands for is very attractive for a certain group of people. It offers a form of communal belonging lacking in daily life in the League's organizational network or in commitment to a local identity. The League creates this community through its widespread network of personal relations and activities, integrating individuals beyond purely political work. Its ideological program constantly refers to a community defined by regional or ethnic criteria. It presents itself as the defender of a local identity threatened by the disintegrative force of modern society, immigration, political corruption and bad administration.

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16. In 1985 the gross value added at market prices for Lombardy was 107.5 Mrd EGO compared to 40.8 for Puglia, Basilicata and Calabria combined. See *Statistical Yearbook for Regions of the EEC* (1989), p. 82.

17. This is particularly true of Italy, where subnational differences and identities have remained traditionally strong and where the centralized nation-state faces severe legitimation deficits. See Giorgio Bocca, *La disunità d'Italia* (Milan: Garzanti, 1991).

18. It is in this context that Hueglin speaks of regionalism as an authentic response to the obsolescence of nation-state politics. See Thomas O. Hueglin, "Regionalism in Western Europe. Conceptual Problems of a New Political Perspective," in *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 18 (1986), pp. 439-58.

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Conclusions

The Lombard League has effectively "interpreted" these widespread public grievances and translated them into the successful political mobilization of previously apolitical social sectors. This "translation" has been possible through the creation of the new identity of the Lombard. Due to the increasingly transnational character of the contemporary world, it is becoming conceivable even for small regions to seek independence, as long as they can be integrated in a multinational community. One of the League's slogans is "Away from Rome, closer to Europe." Culturally such a project became feasible because the League filled an ideological vacuum left by those political forces which had hitherto dominated the Italian political scene: Communism and Catholicism. People are no longer "naturally" socialized into one of these two cultures, nor could they expect a viable political project from either of them. Communism is no longer a credible political alternative to the existing system and the Church can no longer take for granted an unreflected participation in the Catholic *Weltanschauung*. Furthermore, the main national parties are increasingly unable to integrate people into political and social life, since they are considered part of an unresponsive and corrupt political system.

The League's regionalism provides an alternative. It fulfils the needs of people whose desire for political participation was previously hindered by their standing outside the prevailing system of representation. The League's call for a regional identity promises the protection or reconstruction of an authentic community. Its political project successfully addresses the widespread feeling of uneasiness toward the gradual disintegration of the traditional lifeworld. In addition, the League has recently attempted to formulate a more articulate federalist program to offset its subcultural image and appeal to middle-class urban professionals in large northern cities.

The League addresses precisely those problems with which the Italian public is most concerned: political corruption, the *partitocrazia*, the inefficiency of public services, and the alienation between citizens and state agencies. But it does not simply raise issues high on the public agenda. It also proposes a realistic solution: a strong federal order.

Post-Electoral Appendix

"It was an earthquake," ran the headline of an influential Italian newspaper commenting on the results of the April 1992 national elections. In the days following, this image was quickly adopted as the standard media metaphor to illustrate the feeling of incredulity and

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shock that hit Italian politics as the electoral results rolled in. Particularly in the Northern part of the country a major displacement of votes had occurred. The traditional Italian parties, which had ruled Italy in various coalitions for the last 45 years, had suffered a significant defeat, while in the North an alliance of separatist parties, led by the Lombard League, had scored an unprecedented success. The decline of traditional parties rendered a standard center-left coalition almost impossible, as these parties could not form a reliable parliamentary majority. The fragmentation of the votes and the growth of several small new parties across the political spectrum also made alternative coalitions impossible. Another slogan adopted by the media a few weeks after the election was: "the old [system] is no more, while the new one is not yet." The seriousness of this situation became apparent when on April 23 the opening meeting of Parliament failed to elect a speaker for the first time in forty years.

The Parliament resulting from this election reflects a political system in which the support for traditional parties comes increasingly from the poorer South deluged with public monies, while the affluent North, in supporting the separatist Leagues, expresses what most observers describe as a protest vote: a protest against rampant political corruption, the inefficiency of public services and a failed renewal of a ruling class that has had the same leaders for four decades.

Behind these electoral results loom the epochal changes resulting from the collapse of communism in the Eastern Bloc. Italian communism suffered a loss of credibility, and was also penalized by the formation of a splinter group — *Rifondazione Comunista* — faithful to Marxist orthodoxy. In addition, international developments altered the political strategies of the moderate electorate who used to support the Christian Democrates as the "lesser evil," i.e., as the choice in a political emergency dictated by an external communist threat. As politics in Europe shifts to the Right, the moderate electorate has become free to manifest this skeptical attitude toward Christan Democracy — an attitude they never succeeded in overcoming. In this context, the frequently documented cases of infiltration into politics by organized crime became ever more intolerable, and publicized disagreements between leading industrialists and politicians in government ever more revealing as they punctuated the electoral campaign.[19] The beneficiaries of these changes were the Leagues. They gathered votes from Left to Right, appearing as a new and promising force to a significant portion of the electorate.

19. For instance there was a clash between Giulio Andreotti and officials of the Milan stock exchange, who reproached the government for generating a huge public debt.

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*The Lombard League: From Cultural Autonomy to Integral Federalism**

Bernard Poche

The Lombard League emerged as a major political force in the local elections of May 1990. Its continued growth has been accompanied by charges of "populism" and "racism." Political scientists classify its success as the result of a "protest vote" — a raw manifestation of political discontent not unlike the support extended to the pensioners' party, the Greens and others. But the Lombard League is not reducible to this, or to a feverish surge of localism. Neither is it the result of the supposed unpopularity of the Christian Democrats after too long a "reign." It can only be understood in terms of Italian history and above all the relation between state and society, which is rapidly breaking down.

Italian unity came late and remained a superficial phenomenon. While wars generated patriotism, they did not generate national identity. Rome's emblematic role has remained limited. Italy is a country without a capital because none was really necessary. Italian society, which only delegates to the political apparatus what it absolutely must, remains organized around a plurality of poles and regions.

To understand the League phenomenon it is thus important to acknowledge that Italy never became a real nation-state. The bureaucratic, centralized state inherited from the Savoy Monarchy (itself a direct descendant of the Enlightenment) has always remained remote from popular consciousness and basic social organization. It is commonplace to say that Northerners feel removed from Southerners. The

* Translated by Lavinia Kennett and Eleni-Mahaira Odoni.

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problem is not properly understood as one of explicit or implicit racism. Rather it arises intellectually from a deep-seated federalist tradition and emotionally from an equally deep-seated tradition of local community autonomy. Political philosophers (and quasi-statesmen) of the first half of the 19th century, such as Vincenzo Gioberti and above all Carlo Cattaneo, represent a vivid federalist tradition in the political culture of the North.[1]

Therefore it makes sense to say that the "modern" Italian state is based on a profound ambiguity: federalist-minded in the North, in the South it is both micro-localist and clientelistic in the sense of the old Roman patron-client relation of the absentee *padrone*. This was possible for three reasoons: 1) an *economic* equilibrium between a weak non-interventionist state and a web of large and medium-sized enterprises constituting a family-based clan of entrepreneurs sensitive to technological innovations and deeply involved in international affairs; 2) a *political* equilibrium between the Christian Democrats, who were able to take over the secular Italian state (thanks to Mussolini's ambivalence) and a Communist Party satisfied with wielding power without ever really challenging anything; and 3) a *social* equilibrium enabling the managerial class to support a rather ineffective political party in exchange for a relative lack of intervention by the state (e.g., tolerance of tax evasion, or smooth employment policies through *Cassintegrazione* or compensation for party activity system).

Because of the instability of the European and worldwide situation, the obsolete and inflexible nature of the Italian political system, and the increasing complexity of the economic system in both the private and public sectors, these equilibria no longer hold. The Lombard League has had the intellectual and political courage to tackle these problems as a whole. This is not to overlook some of its simplistic positions or to ignore the utopianism underlying some of its proposals, but rather to acknowledge its increasingly crucial role in Italian politics.

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1. Thus Carlo Cattaneo is routinely refered to as a Lombard or Milanese. It should also be noted that this tradition, which the League has redefined as "Integral Federalism," has little in common with other historic models such as the US. It is rooted not in the rationalist view of a new society on a new continent, but in the local community tradition of Italian people. Cf. Carlo Cattaneo, *Stati Uniti d'Italia — Il federalismo, le Leghe,* edited by Daniele Vimercati (Milan: Sugarco Edizioni, 1991). Not incidentally, the book's editor is the same columnist of *Il Giornale* who has written or edited other books on the Lombard League, as well as *Vento del Nord, la Mia Lega, la Mia Vita*, a collection of interviews with Umberto Bossi (Milan: Sperling e Kupfer, 1992).

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The Origins of the Lombard League.

According to the only available history of the Lombard League,[2] it was a chance encounter with the leader of the Union Valdotaine (who died shortly afterwards) that encouraged Umberto Bossi to extend the idea of self-government to Lombardy. At the time the regulatory role of the Italian state was becoming increasingly counterproductive *vis-à-vis* the general organization of the service sector, as well as in terms of the functioning of an increasingly distant political apparatus. Every new scandal or act of organized violence further jeopardized the legitimacy of party politics and centralism.

Three main characteristics of the post-1945 Italian parliamentary system are important here: the state's weakness in the face of political compromises; the political parties' monopolistic management of the country; and nepotism. These handicaps were a direct consequence of the gap between state and society. Gradually the state apparatus became "colonized" by the party machineries — a situation which has been labelled *partitocrazia*. With the growing complexity of the modern economy, however, these disadvantages are no longer tolerable. A truly modern state cannot fail to intervene especially in two areas: public services (e.g., long-distance transportation and telecommunications systems, universities and research policy, and health care) and problems of employment policy related to questions of productivity in companies and public offices. The laxness of the Italian state produced two kinds of consequences: a general and continuous fall in the quality of services and an employment policy characterized by the disproportionate employment of Southerners in state service industries and public offices as a consequence of the overall collapse of industrialization in the South. These structural features of Italian state policy continue to exacerbate the division between state and society.

In the view of many Northerners, the separation from the South is complete. The latter is managed by Rome, where all the wheeling and dealing takes place. It is a center lacking any representative credibility and seemingly not especially interested in the efficiency of public services, the modernization of the infrastructure, urban development or ecological matters. Neither is it concerned with finding solutions to the enormous and recurrent "Southern question" — including the Mafia's growing power. From a rural criminal organization whose significance

2. Daniele Vimercati, *I Lombardi alla Nuova Crociata: Il "Fenomeno Lega" dall'Esodio al Trionfo* (Milan: Mursia, 1990).

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was still relatively unclear, the Mafia has become an "octopus" (the expression most employed by the Italian press). Dissatisfied with its racketeering and control of the drug traffic, it has expanded into well-organized kidnappings and profits greatly from the practically uncontrollable sums of money the state periodically sets aside to aid the South, where the corruption/clientelism dualism is no longer even problematic because it has become so much a part of normal political life.

Due to the preeminence of regional social consciousness in Italian society, this evolution in the South has produced no sense of a classic political state of emergency. Yet a book such as Giorgio Bocca's[3] — a best-seller in Italy — seems to express the common people's dismay and the state's powerlessness, as if the problem were really one of culture in the broadest meaning of the term.

The Lombard League's account is not much different. From its viewpoint, the South appears to be a separate country. Moreover, the Italian government's attempts since the end of the war to develop it (from outside) seem to have collapsed, and appear to have been at odds with nature. The League analyzes the consequences of such attempts as a "perverse effect": the more Southerners receive assistance by means of an uncontrolled welfare system and employment in public offices, the less they are encouraged to develop any kind of initiative.

The clientelistic system has the same results. Given an increasing devolution of the classic tendencies of the so-called "Assembly system" that nearly corresponds to government by coalitions of political parties and their machineries, the capacity of arbitration by the state authority is considered very low, as is the state's autonomy, the continuity of its activity and the competence of the public officers corps. The administrative system seems to be the result of a crisscross process joining the direct and clientelistic implications of politicians on the spot (including subsidies, misappropriation of welfare funds, etc.) and basic bureaucracy.

It follows that the core of the society-state agreement in Italy (if that is what it is) has little content. The vast majority of the population does not ask the state to create and maintain large-scale equilibria and long-term plans, but wants only a minimal management of services and proper handling of traditional affairs of sovereignty (such as the Army, foreign affairs and currency). At the society level each part has its proper "way of life," its "culture" (including local history, language, effective relation to and economic use of territory) and its real responsibility.

3. *La disunità d'Italia: Per Venti Milioni di Italiani la Democrazia è in Coma e l'Europa si Allontana* (Milan: Garzanti, 1990).

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The Italian state is in no way the guarantor of the smooth functioning of Italian society or, rather, societies. The notion of arbitration is largely irrelevant to the political culture, especially in the North. Defining themselves as the heirs of a "Calvinist" culture (an expression often heard from League leaders, meaning something akin to Max Weber's "Protestant Ethic") they ascribe to the term "solidarity" a sense not unlike that of "Christian charity."

Given that in 1989 the League's program simultaneously called for defense of the Lombard language and reinstatement of the Lombard flag, for local management of social security, employment, as well as the creation of a Lombard fiscal system, it is necessary to consider a strategy with two origins. The first is the old — and rather obsolete even in Italy — problematics of the ethno-territorial minority that, however, Italians know perfectly well by a very clear and vivid example: the South Tyrol or the Bolzano/Bozen province. The second is the federalist (and local) culture of the North. The pretext or the starting point is a clear demand for cultural autonomy in the most usual sense, i.e., precisely what the "Belgian" Flemish demanded 30 years ago. But the objective is clearly not cultural in the limited sense of the 1970s regionalist movements. It is economic, financial and ultimately organizational. Using the classic Italian method of the "*pacchetto*" (package), the Lombard League has put forth a twelve-point program focused on three themes: 1) self-government for Lombardy as part of a modern Italian state able to reestablish equal treatment for the North and the South and deploy economic policies which take into account the vitality of industrialized zones; 2) a shift from the central government to Lombardy of powers necessary to redress the present pathological situation in local finances, public administration, schools, welfare, pension programs, housing and employment; and 3) emphasis on Lombard history, language, culture, social and moral values, and restricting military service of local youths to Lombardy.

In 1989 these demands may have seemed demagogic and even somewhat folkloric. Two years later they seemed close to those of independence movements in the Baltic and later in "Slavic" states. In both cases what is being challenged is the state's claim to govern in a uniform and centralized fashion — something that never really has happened or been accepted. The existing system should collapse and the internal dynamics of local, territorially-bound communities should be allowed to unfold, unencumbered by a central state apparatus. Since it has proven impossible to organize society on the basis of the state, it might be wiser to reverse the procedure.

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Bossi's demands thus seek to facilitate a wholesale transfer of resource management and decision-making powers to regions. The main question has to do with the legitimacy of such a demand. The strategy Lombard League's strategy combines the traditional symbolic themes borrowed from the German-speaking South Tyrol region with warnings about a situation of danger *vis-à-vis* the economy of a key region of Italy. The symbol of the Lombard League — the historic League of Lombard cities organized against Frederic Barbarossa in the 12th century — is highly evocative. Far from a small fringe region asking that its delicate idiosyncrasies be protected, it is rather the case of a productive and dynamic land claiming to be endangered by the negligence and irrelevance of the central power. The contract is actually broken; it is now necessary to tackle the problem on a regional level, where society can articulate its interests effectively and control the results. This is the way to federalism. It succeeds for the very reasons that it did in Flanders in 1960. Political-electoral trends have shown that Bossi's analyses corresponded to the expectations of a large part of the people. The electors seemed to understand quite well what was involved: a complete change in the structural basis of the Italian political system.

The Electoral Growth

Officially founded in 1984, the Lombard League participated in the European elections of that year as part of a broad "Union for a Federlist Europe," which won more than 160,000 votes, 10% from the League — at that time unknown and lacking media support. In the administrative elections the following year the League managed to win a few seats in the Varese province and started serious organizational work which, in the 1987 political elections, carried Bossi to the Senate and Giuseppe Leoni, another leader, to the Chamber of Deputies, with almost 3% of the Lombard vote and with as much as 7.4% in Varese. This unexpected success immediately unleashed derision and attacks by the press and political circles. But the 1989 European elections and the 1990 administrative elections marked even more significant electoral successes. During the elections for the European Parliament the Lombard League earned 8% of the votes in Lombardy, where it became the fourth party (behind the Christian Democrats, the Communists and the Socialists) with two deputies in Strasbourg, almost 15% of the votes in Bergamo and a significant presence in the rest of Northern Italy. In the 1990 administrative elections the League became fully established, both in the regional Council of Lombardy (with 15 of the 80 seats), and in Milan's Municipal Council (10 seats, while receiving as

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much as 30% of the vote in some areas). These gains were made by articulating simple themes through a few slogans, repeated hundreds of times, about Lombardy as Italy's "hen that lays the golden eggs," and its exploitation by Rome and the South — although the latter was depicted less as an accomplice than a victim of a perverted system and of the country's general disarray.

The first Congress of the Lombard League-Northern League in February 1991 officially sanctioned a new level of operation. This was a response to two problems: how to tie the League's social definition of its territory to a modern culture and how to institutionalize it. The League soon abandoned linguistic claims and focused instead on the "culture of the Alps and the Po Valley", thus successfully bringing together three main themes: 1) the region's spatial unity; 2) an economic tradition based on rich agriculture and on active industry, the latter combining large industrial groups and medium-sized industries; and 3) a similar history from the old free cities to the cradle and origin of the Italian Kingdom (through intermediary Austrian domination and/or influence). A "natural" boundary could thus be determined between this part of Italy (adding Tuscany), the Center and the South, historically submitted to the feudal power of popes and Spanish kings. So the latter part is supposed to have developed "a political culture of subjection."

The Lombard League is the major unit of the Northern League (the other components are the reconstituted Venetian League and Autonomous Piedmont, an organization created after a split between the Lombard League and Roberto Gremmo's old Piedmont Union). The League has also encouraged the birth of a Central and a Southern League, both of which remain relatively small. In any case, the Lombard League has managed to gain considerably more credibility in its claim to seek an "integral federalism." An Italy of three federal republics would make more sense and be more "modern" than a system of "Swiss cantons," predicated on Italy's traditional regions which, in addition to Lombardy, would have called for the creation *ex nihilo* of 19 federal structures, most of which were clearly not interested in such a system. The issue was Italy's global transformation as opposed to the earlier call for Lombardy's autonomy. This scenario followed Gianfranco Miglio's more intellectually sophisticated and carefully articulated positions,[4] while proposing the constitution of autonomous structures for the South. Deprived of its

4. Cf. Gianfranco Miglio, *Per un'Italia "federale"* (supplement to *Mondo Economico*, No. 20, August 4, 1990); and *Una Costituzione per i Prossimi Trent'Anni*, an interview with Marcello Staglieno (Bari: Laterza, 1990).

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chronic assistance from the North, the South would be forced to take care of its own business. Similarly, the Mafia would lose its main source of financing which is now a result of the skimming of a substantial part of the subsidies ostensibly earmarked for Southern development.

A local election in Valenza Po in Piedmont in Fall 1990 prefigured the League's growing impact. Until then politicians and intellectuals had treated the issue with contempt, as a mere expression of "localism." Articles, reports and books began to appear, but the same attitude remained. The Christian Democrats began encouraging decentralization, under the leadership of Martinazzoli, a party official from Brescia who after the June 1991 ministerial reshuffling became Minister of Administrative Reform. During this time the government crisis has been fueled by spectacular initiatives from the President of the Republic, Francesco Cossiga, as well as by the far more insidious and wavering antics of the Socialist Party and its leader, Bettino Craxi. Today there is a general feeling that an era has come to an end, and there is open talk of a Second or perhaps even a Third Republic. Consequently, it is no longer possible to continue to "ghettoize" the League as a localist phenomenon or mere "protest vote."[5]

Two major events have made this clear: first, the League's internal crisis over the exclusion of the "participationists" and their leader, Franco Castellazzi, a long-standing friend of Bossi; and second, Brescia's municipal elections, which saw the League topping the Christian Democrats by a tenth of a point, thus becoming the leading party in the district. Following administrative elections, which sent many League council members to local assemblies, the problem arose concerning their role and eventual alliances with other parties. Castellazzi was the leader of this "realist" wing, which sought to participate in alliances with other parties. Bossi, however, believed in strict opposition, holding out for a stronger position from which to introduce fundamental reforms. After his injunction in October 1991, Castellazzi and his friends resigned from their delegations and duties. The ensuing conflict produced a secession and led to their creation of a competing organization. Despite angry outbreaks and waverings, however, these difficulties have not really weakened the League.

In the wake of this break, Bossi urged the local Brescia group to put together an electoral list lacking well-known personalities for the municipal elections of November 24, 1991. Thus a totally unknown 35-year old

5. Cf. Renato Mannheimer ed., *La Lega Lombarda* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1991).

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woman led the League to a jolting victory. The newspaper *La Republica* featured an article titled "Brescia in Ruins" and quoted the Christian Democrats as being "resigned to losing." By approaching 25% (24.4%) and, more important, by gaining over four percentage points in only a year, the League had topped off an uninterrupted five-year growth. Senator Bossi was in a position to offer his candidacy to a possible alliance to promote essential reforms yet to be defined.

Issues in Dispute

Three issues of the Lombard League should be briefly addressed: the charges that the League is "racist"; the question of populism versus federalism and democracy; and the economic base. As for the first, the North-South dispute concerns largely the incoherent state policy towards the South and the disadvantages of that policy for both North and South. The League's account clearly overlooks the fact that the South and the market it has represented since Italy's unification has been a major factor contributing to the North's prosperity. Since the end of WWII, however, the problem has become rather one of creating the basis for self-development in the South. Such efforts have succeeded in some places such as the Bari region. Generally, however, they have failed, and the Northerners' argument is that the current policy is a *cul-de-sac*. According to them, central policies designed to deploy this Southern labor force in the North toward low-productivity service industries creates a growing problem.

Much of the "racism" argument has been the result of the League's position *vis à vis* "extra-communitarian immigrants" (an Italian euphemism for Arab and African immigrants, recently broadened to include Albanians and Slavs). This influx, which never has been formally sanctioned, is still relatively limited, although highly visible. The League's position, which boils down to "let us industrialize these countries instead of destructuring their economies and importing their labor power at the expense of our own productivity," is somewhat academic, but only because the problem is world-wide. It is not entirely unfounded.

As for "populism," in a number of European countries the problem of social organization is being posed in territorial terms, e.g., in Scotland, Eastern Europe and Spain. This question addresses two kinds of crises: that of the state as a protector against external dangers and that of the system of representation by political parties claiming access to truth about social organization. The arrangement of the European continent into various nation-states presupposes an equilibrium of

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military, diplomatic, economic strengths, and, within each of them, a virtually homogenous mass of citizens divided only by general opinions or value systems with each system. Two factors have contributed to the consolidation of this system: first, the large military-economic coalitions both in the West and in Socialist countries; second, the spontaneous evolution of political parties in continental Europe that made them appear as large intermediary systems monopolizing the right to express social consciousness. Both factors have now become obsolete.

It is not surprising that a new type of federalism is now being proposed at various levels. The state no longer would be organized on *value* models, but on a generalized "subsidiarity" system. It would retain powers needed to coordinate, while the real basis of sovereignty would devolve upon groups whose smaller scale makes possible the development of specific policies and the actual management of social control. It is impossible and somewhat ludicrous to apply the same rules and rely on the same basis of consensus for Milan and Palermo. Far from constituting sheer demagogy, this approach would seem to suggest a new "creative utopia" to respond to an extensive crisis of both parliamentary and "socialist" systems.

In regard to the problem of the economy and especially of the industrial leaders' support for the League, certain Italian intellectuals used to say that the League phenomenon has had its favorite birthplace in "depressed areas." They compare it to "*poujadisme*," the French political movement of the 1950s whose main leader was a little shopkeeper from a small town in rural France. According to direct personal investigations, this is incorrect. In Northern Italy small and median enterprises constitute a very dense and dynamic system: an interconnected network of technologically modern industries often exporting more than 60% of their production. It follows that some of their leaders are among the League's main supporters and, in some cases, are executives.

Again it should be noted that this preeminence of a dense web of highly productive enterprises is an Italian idiosyncrasy — perhaps most conspicuous in the North. However, they have become increasingly hindered by a combination of negative factors: high taxes, high wages (labor costs ranks second in Europe, behind Germany, and far ahead of France), poor transportation and telecommunication networks, high interest rates connected with the enormous public debt (1.5 times the GNP); bad policies in the public sector (particularly health and education) that have driven people to pay dearly for good

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services in the private sector. By and large, business leaders and executives are justified in claiming that their attempts to keep up with new international trends are seriously compromised by generally counterproductive state policies.

At the same time these problems have contributed to an extensve disengagement of large industrial-financial groups from Italy altogether. Major businessmen such as Agnelli and Berlusconi are seeking to diversify their activities at least throughout Europe, and have for the past few years drawn the conclusion from the incoherence of central state policy — sometimes after having profited from that policy (for instance by obtaining substantial subsidies to invest in large and barely profitable factories in the South, dubbed "cathedrals in a desert").[6]

Small and median enterprises cannot (and will not, because of their attachments to place, family and personal networks) do the same. They are thus committed to local democracy articulated as part of an "integral federalism" in order to restore a more adequate management of general public policy. They want to have local control of public finances without the mediation of supposedly corrupt party politics.[7] For these reasons and others, in the European context this renewal of federalism promises to provide a viable alternative to existing arrangements.

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6. Cf. the satirical book by "Anonimo Lombardo," *Della Guerra dei Politici Contro il Nord e Contro l'Italia* (Milan: Sperling e Kupfer, 1991). The author is actually a well-known columnist frequently quoted as expressing the opinion of leading business leaders.

7. Not by chance a recent issue of *The Economist* (n. 7752, March 28, 1992) published an article entitled "A New Risorgimento — Responsible Italians have a Duty Next Month to Vote Irresponsibly": "The Republican Party or one of the groups in the Lega Nord would be *The Economist's* choice."

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*Farewell to Regionalism**

Lothar Baier

La bouche rouge (red mouth) is a type of chestnut common to the French Alpine region of Cevenne. It is also the name of a magazine founded in the same region in the mid-1970s. The trees were threatened by a disease eating its way through the forests from East to West and from top to bottom. The journal set out to expose environmental pollution and took a militant stand against centralism for neglecting the peripheral regions of France. Similarly, the idea of regional autonomy was idealized in terms of a distant past when the South was not yet part of France, still spoke its own Occitanian language, and its troubadours founded their own courtly culture.

The red mouths of Southern France were not the only ones open at this time. All over Western Europe voices of rebellion united around the slogans of regionalism. For example, in 1976 Lars Gustafsson edited a volume of the journal *Tintenfisch* on the subject, with numerous contributions by Scandinavian authors. From them we learned that there were groups of the population which felt oppressed by centralism even in countries without significant national minorities. Even the anti-colonialist Swedish Social Democrats, who have historically supported egalitarianism, had tolerated social relations which could be considered a kind of "internal colonialism." According to Gustafsson: "The industrial center treats the province as if it were not there. All decisions are made by the central powers in the metropolis, which accordingly destroy the identity and dignity of the people. Thus we are

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faced with a new anti-authoritarian movement: neo-regionalism." Not only was this language of liberation revealing in the mid-1970s, so also was the widespread protest that rural provinces in the middle of Europe were being treated like distant colonies. Gustafsson even reported conversations he had with the employees of a provincial railway station in the Vestmanlian Lake region, where he had his summer home: "They felt abandoned, superfluous, and spoke of the central state bureaucracy as one would of an occupying power."

While writing a contribution to *Tintenfisch* in the spirit of Gustafsson's neo-regionalism, I spent some time in the land of the dying chestnut trees and Occitanian language. Although there was resistance to industrial centralism, there was also flight from the country and deindustrialization. While in the lower Rhône valley whole communities voted against the construction of a nuclear plant planned by the state electrical authority (EDF), in the Cevenne foothills workers and their families occupied a lead-mining operation after the corporate headquarters had announced its closing. *La bouche rouge* became the organ of regional protest. Theater groups began to portray political commentaries at the traditional village fairs in Occitanian. A school teacher from the Carcassone region, Claude Marti, soon became the protest leader. He understood the need for combining the pathos of national liberation movements with the traditions of the troubadour. In my article I quoted from one of his Occitanian songs: "There lived a people under the sun/ no greater or smaller than we/save for one difference/they were masters of their own house."

What has become of the awakened consciousness of regional traditions and culture which opposed the homogenizing forces of the nation-state? The red mouths have long been shut. The tower of the lead mine still dominates the region's landscape, although it is no longer active and the gradual disappearance of agricultural and industrial jobs continues. But the region is thriving. Many local and regional radio stations now feature the Occitanian language. When I recently drove down Highway 7 in the Rhône Valley I encountered a symbolic change that would have been seen as a capitulation to the nation-state in the 1970s: the road signs had become bilingual. This regionalist reform, which ten years earlier might have triggered inflammatory parliamentary speeches prophesying the imminent decline of the "one and indivisible Republic," has had some comical results. If the town of Piolenc is also called Pioulenc, this has little to do with respect for the regional language which hardly anyone in the industrial core of the Rhône Valley can

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speak. It rather serves as a pronunciation guide for tourists from the North who want to learn that the Occitanian "o" is pronounced as "u," though Pioulenc is never written.

If bilingual road signs, the use of regional expressions in advertisements for wine and cheese, and the brand name "Occitanian House" do not quite reflect the notion of regionalism articulated by the *Tintenfisch* contributors, it does not mean that the campaign for regionalism has failed. While it has lost one of its key attributes, namely its opposition to authority and its call for emancipation and direct democracy, the principle has prevailed all over Europe. Has any recent social criticism had as much of an impact as regionalism? Socialism is no longer an option, as it was for many advocates of 1970's regionalism (e.g., the editors of *La bouche rouge*). Yet everyone is talking about regions. If Brussels Eurocrats used to deal only with milk quotas, they now speak freely about a "Europe of regions."

Marti's Occitanian ditty could be sung by communist supporters of the Cuban Revolution and Slovaks damning the Czech president Vaclav Havel, or even by the supporters of the Lombard League. The only difference is that nobody in Southern France is listening anymore. What is there about this notion of "region" that in so few years could change so radically as to become the slogan of such disparate groups as a colorful collection of folkloric protectors of homelands, successful high-tech entrepreneurs, the ethno-pluralism of the New Right, Euromanagers, Central European separatists, environmental advocates of recycling and disappointed internationalists? No one can blame the 1970's regionalists for not being able to predict that the old nationalisms and new forces set loose with the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia can no longer be quelled by the ideas of a good-natured autonomy. What Gustafsson called "neo-regionalism" was more an answer to the questions of the past than to those of the future. It was "neo" to distinguish this regionalism from older versions compromised with reactionary doctrines rooted in *Blut und Boden*. Its democratic, emancipatory, anti-authoritarian impulse was undoubtedly genuine, but was not based on a clear analysis of the changing relations between center and periphery, state and region. It was a pipe dream.

Along with other *Tintinfisch* authors, I paid close attention to the various regional protest movements and attempted to make the obvious connection between them and anti-colonial uprisings in the Third World. The main injustice of the centralized European state was that it exploited regional resources without giving the regions a say in the

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matter. In his programmatic "Five Theses about a Possible Turning Point," Robert Jungk not only took note of the fact that the centralized control of modern industrial societies causes regional injustices but that centralization itself is increasingly prone to crisis. He thus called for a radical decentralization "which develops a set of interconnected priorities from the already weakened center." It is no accident that Chancellor Kohl's advisors have articulated something similar, since Jungk's observations anticipated what has in fact already occurred. Fifteen years ago Jungk wrote that "emphasis on communal, national and regional identity [could] easily become a pretext for various collective self-interests." How can one prevent a drive for greater regional autonomy from being coopted by collective self-interest? The only precondition whereby a decentralized society could function was "that those regions with a higher degree of autonomy and productive capacities not be determined by capitalist competition but rather by socialist solidarity."

Theoretically it was not a bad idea. But it did not foresee that such a notion as "socialist solidarity" would soon be met with laughter. Slovak, Slovenian, Moldavian and Ukrainian separatists have had enough of such rhetoric, and with good reason. At the same time, such regionalist movements as the Lombard League in Italy and the Christian Social Union in Bavaria present themselves as sympathetic revolts against a repressive centralized state. Expressions of solidarity with the struggle of the Baltic Republic against Moscow are a dime a dozen. But West European centralism, against which they define themselves, is no longer what it used to be.

The 1970's regionalists focused on the lack of recognition of the periphery by the industrial center. Thus, like Gustafsson, they sought to make themselves heard by emphasizing their particularities, their languages and dialects, and their own *separate* history. That was not wrong. The error was to assume that the presumed representative center of greed and exploitation still existed. The centers have not only multiplied but have become regionalized. The central points have become spokes and axes extending beyond the borders of West European countries and have allowed the development of zones of higher infrastructural concentration and prosperity. Such zones prefer to call themselves "regions" in a bow to the regionalist revolt against the centralist states. For example, the high-tech state of Baden-Württemberg has bypassed Bonn and Paris to establish overt-covert relations with the Rhône-Alps region, which likewise sees itself as a chosen land of innovative productivity.

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The problem is that the central state against which the new regionalism is opposed no longer has this all-encompassing dictatorial power, not even in traditionally centralistic France and still less in Italy and Germany. The central state has gradually taken over those functions that Jungk defined as "socialist solidarity," i.e. the agency to guarantee the relative balance of regions varying in productivity and prosperity. It is precisely this balance that the wealthier regions are now opposing when they wave their banners against the central state, as if they were the reincarnation of the anarchists of the early 20th century or the anti-colonial freedom-fighters. Groups like the Lombard League are fighting to be free of the obligation to share the costs of modernization in other regions from which they profit. The League has even threatened to park its Lombardian Eldorado on the other side of the Italian state line should Central and Southern Italy continue to insist on national solidarity. No one can say whether or not one fine day the Bavarian and Baden-Württembergian Leagues might promise their voters to free the Southern German leg from the Mecklenburgian and Thuringian ball and chain.

As Victor Zaslavsky has noted in *Das Russische Imperium unter Gorbatschow*, these regional or ethno-regional separatist movements are part of a "global process, which is not only observable in Soviet-type societies but also in Italy, Canada, Spain and other countries. Baltic separatism, the independence movement in Slovenia, and rising social movements in Northern Italy such as the Lombard League have something structurally in common." They combine their regionalist egotism, which once exposed is quite ugly, with thinly veiled attempts at cultural and historical ornamentation. The great bard of Central European values, Milan Kundera, declared in *Le Monde* that Slovenia has a right to Western assistance because historically it has been the birthplace of poets, because it protected the Christian faith in its orderly Catholic form together with a true search for Reformation, and because the half-Slovenian city of Trieste was for a time the home of James Joyce. By these standards, the other Yugoslav Republics are unimportant because they are ruled by Eastern barbarism and bleak religious orthodoxy — if not the Islam of the Ottoman Age, Balkanese gloom. The Albanians in Kosovo and the Bosnians should figure out for themselves how to get out of the mess in Yugoslavia.

The new regionalist ideology in Western Europe takes a similar, if somewhat, milder form. The fact that prosperous industries are concentrated in certain regions is also given a cultural, if not an ethnic,

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interpretation. The fact that one region produces more and is more developed than another is not the result of certain investment decisions or matters having to do with the infrastructure and education, but are attributed to unchangeable historical and cultural characteristics. The inhabitants are entitled to their wealth because their ancestors in some distant past acquired cultural or religious merit whereby they produced architects, popes, and feudal lords. If the 1970's regionalists emphasized their differences from the national mass of the population in order to balance symbolically the disadvantages of peripheral regions, the symbols of regional particularity today provide some regions' economic privileges with a particular historical justification. The results of rapid modernization, which raise the economic level in the short run, become historicized into a remarkable pre-modern consciousness: technological dynamics become an anthropological characteristic of the region. The inhabitants of highly productive zones are allowed to consider themselves something special and therefore they have the privilege of bilingual road signs. In the poorer sections of the centralized mass, in which the Occitanian language is still somewhat in use, one searches in vain for such concessions to the regional language.

What was more conspicuous than the road signs along the Southern French highways were the many posters protesting the planned high-speed railway line. One August night a number of such TGV trains were stopped between Avignon and Marseilles. The protest against the extension of the Paris-Lyon line to the Mediterranean has been dismissed by government technocrats as an expression of anti-modern backwardness. Yet this protest could be interpreted as evidence of a progressive consciousness that no longer lends itself to pretty speeches about shorter lines of communication within a "Europe of regions." The protesters have obviously grasped that the construction of high-speed railway lines does not necessarily mean more regional development as it did in the early age of the railroad but rather encourages the further exclusion of regions classified as peripheral. There is no benefit to the inhabitants of the Rhône Valley if the rich retirement paradise of the Côte d'Azur and the high-tech center of Montpelier can in the future be reached faster from Paris (and furthermore, if all goes according to Eurocratic plans, the industrial cities of Northern Italy will be on one side, Barcelona and the prosperous Catalonian region on the other). They see this high-speed railway as the dividing line between the important and the superfluous parts of Europe. Whereas the time of the businessman has become so short and expensive that it pays to save

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half an hour in transit, the time of those who live on or near the tracks of these high-speed trains is not important. This is the message read loud and clear by those who oppose the construction of the TGV, although their voices are not being heard by many.

The *region* in whose name the 1970's regionalism attacked the arrogance of the central government no longer exists. There are now two types of regions: those of the "Europe of regions," i.e., the prosperous zones of intensive production and marketing that attract investments and thus lay claim to certain regional characteristics and historical distinctions; and those which lie between them, the historically empty corridors of no particular significance, which are not included when regions are advocated in the East and the West. The 1970's regionalism made a strong argument for recognition and equal treatment of the region. Since then the centers have regionalized themselves, have created a place for real-existing regionalism in which the privileges of one are balanced by the exclusion of the other. Is it not time to bid farewell to a notion whose further application only contributes to making the changed relation between centers and peripheries unintelligible?

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Curing Germany, Saving Europe

Wolfgang Fach and Annette Ringwald

Two German Identities

Germany's reunification has generated considerable discomfort. It "unleashes a kaleidoscope of contradictory emotions."[1] There is concern both with its looming *rise* to political "grandeur" as well as its possible *fall* into chaos. English government circles have set the tone: "The Germans are stupid."[2] Nicholas Ridley, an English politician, is even more candid. Worried about the "German menace," he has warned about an economically dominant Germany overpowering Europe by unifying it: "This is all a German racket designed to take over the whole of Europe. It has to be thwarted. This rushed take-over by the Germans on the worst possible basis, with the French behaving like poodles to the Germans, is absolutely intolerable."[3] Economics is not the only issue. The real problem is the stupid German. The economy is threatening only "because of their habits."[4]

To support this sort of hysterical suspicion with historical evidence, Margaret Thatcher summoned an illustrious panel of experts to establish the real nature of the German character. Although their conclusions were rather moderate, and — as a member of the panel emphasized — "the weight of the argument was overwhelmingly positive,"[5] this hardly changed the overall evaluation. They came up with a list of negative characteristics, containing "in alphabetical order, *Angst*, aggressiveness,

1. David Marsh, *The Germans* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1990), p. 2.
2. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (March 6, 1991), p. 16.
3. *The Spectator* (July 14, 1990), pp. 8-10.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 9. Ridley did not hesitate to compare Europe's future "lot" to giving the continent to "Adolf Hitler, frankly."

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assertiveness, bullying, egotism, inferiority complex, sentimentality"; and two aspects of the German character were cited as reasons for future concern: "First, a capacity for success, to kick over the traces. Second, a tendency to over-estimate their own strength and capabilities."[6] Caught between admiration of German economic performance and fear of its consequences, Germany's neighbors tend to succumb to the latter.[7]

This fear is not just an Anglo-Saxon idiosyncrasy. It is shared by people such as Bernard-Henry Lévy, who readily admits that "France as a whole . . . is rather afraid of a united Germany."[8] Nor is the phobia a recent phenomenon resulting from Germany's new status. If German flaws are rooted in the collective *character*, suspiciousness extends everywhere. What is at stake is the old distinction between German "culture" and Western "civilization." From a "civilized" viewpoint, "culture" does not mean the prevalence of *Dichter und Denker* but, rather, an overwhelming "love of order" (Havel). Western civilization, on the other hand, has always been characterized, and sometimes handicapped, by a dual society, with intellectual aestheticism hovering above the vulgar strife for material satisfaction.

The German soul, however, may be a little more complex than its manifest "stupidity" indicates. According to the English panel of experts, aggressiveness comes with *Angst*, assertiveness is linked to an inferiority complex, and sentimentality complements egotism. Far from cancelling each other out, these attitudes allegedly converge in a pathological spiral thus creating "the German menace." With economic performance as the nation's strength and pride, economic crisis can only trigger neurotic reactions: "The German problem for over a century has been the heavy economization of political life and a concentration on the values generated by material culture. In the past this has produced a dynamic stability, but also periodic instability and breakdown."[9] Thus Germany has turned out to be an unsettled and unsettling neighbor, even more dangerous when failing than when flourishing.

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5. Timothy Garton Ash. "The Chequers Affair," in *The New York Review of Books* (September 27, 1990), p. 65.

6. *New York Times* (July 20, 1990), p. 27.

7. Accordingly, ". . . there will always be nagging doubts about Germany because of its history and geography, and Germany will always have a nagging doubt about itself. It needs to be offered a lot of carrots and just the occasional stick to make sure it stays bound to the West." Cf. *The Economist* (March 9, 1991), p. 40.

8. *Der Spiegel*, No. 14 (1990), p. 211.

9. Harold James, *A German Identity, 1770-1990* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1989), p. 218. According to James, time and again, "powerful destruction,

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The Political Economy of Reunification

Now that "the German eagle is unbound," what is he likely to do with his freedom? "The broken chains lie on the hillside. He has raised his wings a little, and given a few friendly cries. Will he now spread his wings and rise up, this time to help, not to attack? Or will he rather, like the eagle donated to the Washington zoo by Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, sit sulkily on his perch, gobbling his ample food and disconsolately scratching his breast feathers with that great beak?"[10] Given German "dispositions," other possiblities are equally plausible, raising the question whether Germany's reaction will be *stupid* or *neurotic*. Both are possible. Translated politically, Germany is displaying a proclivity for both *power* and *crisis*.

As "Europe's economic powerhouse,"[11] Germany has more than once displayed an astounding ability to "rise from the ruins." A changed geopolitical situation establishes Germany among the very few "prototypes of a promising future" built on strong economic ties and "complex interdependence."[12] A "late-comer to both nationhood and industrialisation," Germany has become the "third largest indusrial economy after the US and Japan."[13] Cornerstones of this postwar miracle are an export oriented economy, a strong manufacturing industry proud of the German quality label and an independent Federal Bank that controls that "symbol of economic power,"[14] the D-Mark. Germany has mastered its economy: anti-inflation policies and a strong corporatist orientation, along with a tendency for "adjusting" market interventions, have made it a success story, though on occasion a thorn in the fiesh of less-regulated European competitors.

After reunification Germany seemed destined to become an economic "superpower." German political commentaries were enthusiastic.[15] The

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and ultimately radical nationalisms sprang up," swinging "from cultural to political to economic and then back all the way . . ." and "becoming ever more radical in the course of this progression."*Ibid.*, pp. 1 and 3.

10. Timothy Garton Ash, "Germany Unbound," *The New York Review of Books* (October 25,1990), p. 15.

11. Marsh, *The Germans*, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

12. Hanns W. Maull, "Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers," *Foreign Affairs*, No. 102 (Winter, 1990/91), pp. 91-106.

13. Marsh, *The Germans*, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

15. "The figures will prove the successful turnaround. Then Europe will be back on the German agenda, with Western and also middle and Eastern Europe. And then the unified German gross national product will soon be a third of that of Europe as a whole." Cf. *Wirtschaftswoche* (December 7, 1990). p. 5.

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population increase seemed to remedy both the shortage of skilled labor and the looming collapse of the social security net. Territorial expansion, on the other hand, would accomodate heavy trade-surpluses and open a huge domestic market with a presumably highly consumption-oriented population. Old ties and similar traditions supported German ambitions, so that the "industrial bridge between the two Germanies is likely to be quickly rebuilt."[16] German virtues would fit well in this context: "East Germans [are] Germans, presumably as hardworking and productive as their countrymen to the west."[17] What then would be more appropriate than to plug in the German *Wirtschaftswunder* tradition, roll up one's sleeves and take care of reconstruction?

Things have not turned out this way. Outside the governing coalition the outlook turned downright pessimistic. Failures abounded and "Kohl's big mess"[18] stirred heated debates. "The architects of unity expected to inherit a house that could be spruced up and rehabilitated within a few short years. Instead, they are confronted with a society in utter collapse. Rather than a crown jewel, East Germany turns out to be one of the weakest East-block economies."[19] The "whirlwind of unification" (Marsh) has turned out to be a disastrous unpredictable tornado.[20] The reasons for disaster are numerous.

First, the German *Wirtschaftswunder* is far from perfect. A permanent army of unemployed bears witness to long recessions during the 70s and the 80s. Germany's economic sronghold is also its weak spot. The internationalization of its economy makes it especially vulnerable to global trade trends.

Second, the unification of the currency dealt the death blow to the East German economy. Coming shortly before an election, the one-to-one exchange rate of East mark to D-mark was a political rather than an economic decision. The result was an overevaluation of East German products, rendering them even less competitive. The growing demand for more glamorous foreign products aggravated the situation so that

16. Marsh, *The Germans*, *op. cit.*, p. 154.
17. *Newsweek* (April 1, 1991), p. 8.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
20. "In East Germany in 1990, industrial production fell by more than 50%: and to the chagrin of many German politicians, the decline was at least double the economic fall in neighboring Poland. Which has also been going through a transition from socialism to capitalism." Cf. Bruce Stokes, "Germany's Turbulent Unification," *Transatlantic Perspectives*, No. 15 (1991), p. 15. As *Die Zeit* put it: "first unification, now washout." Cf. *Die Zeit* (February 15, 1991), p. 18.

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an increasing amount of money was needed simply to keep the economy from collapsing. Germany now sees itself confronted with an "avalanche of charges"[21] threatening the whole system. "As a result Germany has been transformed from a major exporter of capital to a net importer."[22] The question is: how is Germany going to finance all that? For the moment, by "stretching" the budget. The deficit has grown and has already resulted in tax increases which previously had been categorically ruled out.

Third, people do not always react as expected. The discrepancy between reality and myth reveals a "virtue gap." Marsh has formulated this predicament allegorically: "The miracle is over — and the Germans want to go on holiday."[23] Apparently, West-Germans have had enough with virtues. They have done their duty and now they want a break. To the astonishment of foreign observers, they lead in cutting working hours and have developed a taste for foreign trends.[24]

The situation in the East is also less rosy than expected. There, German virtues obviously went down the drain with the planned economy and it will take time to reinstate them. In the view of their indulgent compatriots, they show a striking lack of initiative and economic drive. Thus "cash alone won't rebuild the East."[25] Beyond economic difficulties loom structural defects. Unsolved distribution of property, administrative anarchy, and a paralyzed judiciary are only part of the horror story. Combined with the decline of the East European market, they spoil the climate for investment. A social collapse followed the economic collapse.

Passions and Interests

After the initial "freedom-frenzy," crisis is now on the agenda. In terms of the previously mentioned idiosyncratic reasons, this should be followed by neurotic reactions. There are indications, however, that this "cycle" may be broken. German nationalism has been thoroughly discredited by fascism to the extent that post-war Germany has shown a remarkable lack of patriotism.[26] This state of affairs has allowed a rational management of the crisis during most of the unification process.

Kohl and most of his compatriots have managed to avoid any chauvinist "frenzy" and carried out unification without too much national

21. *L'Express* (February 22, 1991), p. 18.
22. *Newsweek* (April 1, 1991), p. 7.
23. Marsh, *The Germans*, *op. cit.*, p. 147.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 154.
25. *Newsweek* (April 1, 1991), p. 7.

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pathos. In the beginning, calculations were pragmatic and simple: the economic mess in the new *Länder* called for *economic strategies*. No one had to worry about German accountability. In accordance with the post-war motto, "economically a giant, politically a dwarf,"[27] Germans were only interested in crisis management — nothing more. To avoid the slightest misunderstanding, they never failed to take Europe into account.[28] The D-Mark was seen as "realized liberty,"[29] bringing the fruits of democracy to "brothers and sisters" in the form of consumption and free travel, thus paving the way for the fulfillment of political objectives through economic means. The nation's happiness would then be fulfilled with the introduction of the free market economy. Thus material well-being became the prevailing standard of success.

The allocation of responsibilites was clear-cut: The West provided know-how, the East manpower. Key features of this strategy were financial policies — establishing a sound currency — and the regulation of property distribution. Not accidentally, the main organizer of unification has been the so-called *Treuhandanstalt* — a special agency set up to manage the shift from nationally-owned to private production, independent of the state. The presupposition of this strategy was that if conditions conducive to free enterprise became entrenched, the system would take care of itself. Shock therapy might have been acceptable if it only involved "necessary victims on the road to a social market economy"[30] — assuming, furthermore, that the transformation would take place quickly. Instant success was the name of the game.

The East German *Länder* turned out to be at the edge of an abyss. Instead of curing the patient, the economic treatment almost killed him. Calls for government intervention grew louder. Since then, political measures have become more important than economic "autopoiesis." This means government intervention, which costs money, i.e., West German financial assistance provided by raising taxes.

The moral appeal came about as a *symbolic strategy* designed to boost the economic measures and ease the pain. Thus Kohl called for a "joint

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26. Cf. Russell A. Berman, "The Gulf War and Intellectuals, in Germany and the United States," in *Telos* 88 (Summer 1991), pp. 167-79.

27. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (February 14, 1991), p. 17.

28. According to *Wirtschaftswoche* (December 7, 1990), p. 5: "The only prescription can be: utilizing the growing German economic power in building and furnishing the European house."

29. Ralf Dahrendorf, "Eine Mark für Deutschland," in *Merkur*, No. 497 (1990), pp. 579-82.

50. *Die Zeit* (February 15, 1991), p. 25.

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national effort" to engage (and supposedly unite) Germans, East and West. Unfortunately, according to Offe, "the new nationalism in Germany today does not emanate from emotional popular feeling; witness the fact that a good portion of West German citizens have economic reservations. Instead, this is a carefully figured and modulated 'elite nationalism,' presenting a reassuring backdrop to the drama of rushing into economic unification."[31] The politics of symbolism sought to rely on passions to cover the damage to material interests. This strategy, however, did not work.

The magnitude of the sacrifices correlates with the need for nationalism: both increasingly follow a "logic of escalation" (Offe). Since the state is already drawing on "national emotion" and "national duty," it is only one step further towards nationalism, *pure and simple*. So the neurotic phase in Germany's destiny threatens to return. Overloaded by the historical challenge, the wall of "common sense" may crumble.

Pacifism and its Discontents

According to a leading economic weekly, "now it is back to 'thinking German' — German citizens can once again find their identity by focusing on the nation."[32] This is definitely true for Germany's political class, which seems trapped by the chauvinism it has unleashed in order to compensate for the unification "mess." But there is more to it than that. The management of feelings would probably not have triggered real change — from "interest" to "passion" — had it not coincided with another "crisis" that set off a nationalist wave around the Western world: the Gulf war.

Here the US set the tone. It pulled off a remarkable moral revival. Until very recently, "America's purpose in 'the world' seemed to be a lost one — still shattered by the Vietnam experience and fading in terms of the world economy. But in mid-1991 it was dawn once again: the crusade was over and spirits were high. America was unabashedly celebrating her victory, her soldiers, herself. The American effort had worked well elsewhere. In England volunteers had lined up in front of recruiting centers almost immediately, and despite initial unease about the war and a much dreaded last-minute "solo-run," the French went on to do their duty with due gallantry. And it paid off. The allied nations turned out to be reliable partners — all except one. Germany's first appearance as a

31. Claus Offe, "Vom taktischen Gebrauchswert nationaler Gefühle," in *Die Zeit* (December 14, 1990), p. 42.

32. *Wirtschaftswoche* (September 29, 1990). p. 61.

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full-grown member of the "league of nations" was a flop. Expected to assume her new political role with appropriate *élan* she did next to nothing. While other nations "rushed forward to be helpful," Germany "hung stalwartly back,"[33] preaching peace and insulting her friends ("no blood for oil"). It was called "the land of cowards" (*The Spectator*), and Robert Byrd, the US senator, called the German reaction "totally dishonorable," warning that "the American people will remember that."

But the Germans were not just hypocrites (that they were this, too, became evident when their profitable arms trade activities came to light). The harsh outside criticism triggered a fierce internal debate, splitting the nation into hawks and doves. The latter defended traditional German postwar-"inwardness" now under attack. In order not to fight a lost cause, they had to compromise, thus "losing ground" without winning respectability. Their first line of retreat was sending *money* instead of troops. Because "our American, British, French and Italian friends should know that we stand behind them," the German Chancellor pledged to boost Germany's financial aid to an unspecified "impressive total," which later came to $17 billion. And the Foreign Minister "flew to Tel Aviv, where he presented the Israeli government with a check for 250 million D-Marks" — but only "in humanitarian aid."[34]

When it became evident that money alone would not do, the "pacifist" faction retreated to a second line of defense: law. It insisted that the Constitution all but forbids the deployment of German troops for other than "humanitarian" ends. It was for naught. In Germany as well as abroad the hawks saw only escapism: a "convenient pretext by the Bonn government for not sending troops to the Gulf."[35] Traditionally, money and law have been the *limits of politics* within the post-war German system. But what happens when these walls crumble?

A Hidden Comeback?

A suggested solution was to conrol national bellicosity by channeling it into international peacekeeping: German freedom fighters as UN soldiers or EC warriors. The international faction has its stronghold within the Social Democratic camp, organized by a new generation of party leaders. According to this wing of public opinion-leaders, it was unthinkable that post-Hitler-Germany could dispatch troops on her own. Joining "appropriately instructed" UN forces, however, was another story.

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35. *Newsweek* (March 11, 1991), p. 55.
34. Cf. *Newsweek* (February 4, 1991), p. 43; *Newsweek* (March 11), p. 46.
55. *Financial Times* (March 20, 1991), p. 1.

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They appended two qualifications: the mission had to be international and its purpose had to be valid. The qualified military interventions imagined by these people came close to what German soldiers in fact offered afterwards: emergency service in case of disasters caused by others.

While this attitude has been attacked for being inherently unstable, entangling the nation in international affairs beyond Geman control, others were appalled by the compromising spirit behind those proposals. The latter set the tone among the Christian Democrats — the most prominent of whom is the present Chancellor. Ironically enough, this position also aspired to respectability by referring to Germany's collective guilt.[36]

At any rate, it is Germany's historical duty to return to *Realpolitik*. But those who favor this shift also wonder whether the UN, with all its abstractions and ambiguities, is the proper context within which to do so. The "Atlanticists" — conservatives and traditional Social Democrats who believe in the special value of German-American friendship — tend to emphasize NATO.[37] From different perspectives others draw similar conclusions: "Leading Christian Democrats and foreign politicians . . . have called reunited Germany to greater responsibility in world politics. As the General Secretary of Social Democratic Union Volker Rühe put it, Germany must stand up to the 'reality of her power' and assume the ensuing responsibility. Like Secretary of Defence Stoltenberg, he called for the deployment of the military outside NATO territory and a joint European defence policy."[38] While entailing regionally unlimited "empowerment" of Germany, this approach also indicates a shift of interest: from Atlantic responsibility back to *European sovereignty*. This new reductionism has been reinforced by the embarrassing impotence displayed in face of the Yugoslav civil war.[39] While this event had general European implications, it was particularly important for Germany in that it highlighted the hidden risks of its hidden comeback.

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36. As Schröder writes, "Understandably enough, Germans do not want to go to the battlefields; at the same time, however, they have to learn from the world's war against Hitler not to isolate themselves. This is as true for unified Germany as for the Federal Republic." Cf. Dieter Schröder, "Deutsche an die Front," in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (February 2/3, 1991), p. 4.

37. Thus ex-chancellor Helmut Schmidt cannot understand "why some people in Bonn and Strasbourg favor UN troops. For the UN . . . includes representatives of dictatorial states, whereas the WEU, EC and NATO consist exclusively of democracies." Cf. Helmut Schmidt, "Europa muß die Weichen stellen," in *Die Zeit* (December 6, 1991), p. 1.

38. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (May 16, 1991), p. 6.

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Stop and Go

The Yugoslav crisis brought war to Europe's doorstep. After some initial hesitation the EC acknowledged its responsibility — with Germany as the driving force. According to Genscher, "Europe has to be seen as a unit. Nobody should believe that the EC can retain its political stability and economic dynamics with the Eastern region completely collapsing."[40] As it turned out, German concerns for a European "*Ordnungspolitik*" were as widespread as the distrust of the German initiative.

Already suspicious of the deployment of a Franco-German brigade, seen as centerpiece of an eventual European army, the British were adamant in rejecting Germany's claim for leadership. Secretary of State Hurd immediately made clear that "Germany and Great Britain are members of NATO. We are opposed to everything that might duplicate or weaken this common defense."[41] Mitterand himself, while sill eager to free Europe from US hegemony, displayed a striking reluctance to uphold the *entente cordiale*. At any rate, this incident revealed the determination of Germany's political elite "to bring the EC in line" with a daring "German solo effort," thus arousing suspicion that "behind this fixation on Europe stands a master plan to gain political and economic supremacy."[42] It also showed a helpless embarrassment on the part of allied political elites, who "apparently feared that, one day, they would have no option but to follow Bonn."[43] This presents an essential dilemma: in order to *stop* Germany, they have to go with Germany.

The situation is complicated by the fact that there may have been a hidden "package deal." Accordingly, "European policy toward Yugoslavia will be a first test for whether the Germans get only stones and not one piece of bread for their concessions in Maastricht."[44] Because they did come away with their piece of bread, their present standing as a European power depends on the price they paid there. Many Germans believe they will suffer more than others as a result of this step because, for the sake of continental coherence, they sacrificed what *Le Monde* has called their "national symbol": the D-Mark. In its view, imposing a European currency on the German economy threatens its stability, i.e., the Germans' most cherished value and main asset. Others take the dangers of economic integration more calmly. For them, far from being

39. Cf. Bernard Cassen, "Parler d'une seule voix, mais pour quelle Europe?," in *Le monde diplomatique* (December 1991), p. 4f.
40. *Die Zeit* (August 30, 1991), p. 5.
41. *Der Spiegel*, No. 44 (1991), p. 203.
42. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (December 21/22, 1991), p. 4.
45. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (December 18, 1991), p. 1.

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victimized, Germany managed to expand her economic agenda by imposing her concept of a central bank free of political influences. In the coming years, European countries "which do not have independent central banks will have to free them from governmental tutelage. Forced by strict conditions of admission, such as low inflation rates and moderate interest rates, these governments will have to rectify their traditional economic carelessness if they want to become members of the union." In this respect, "the rule of the D-Mark is not abolished but extended to Europe as a whole. Or so our disgruntled neighbors would have it."[45]

It should have come as no surprise that the British have been most skeptical about this "European Union — the German way" (*The Spectator*), which is certainly not what they had in mind. Against the assumption of "domestication by integration," this criticism has stressed the risks of such a master plan: "Chancellor Kohl has said that the alternatives for Europe lie between domination by Germany and federalism. Mr. Genscher drones on about how 'European' Germany now is, as if Europe were the antidote to Germany's new statehood. But it is wrong to believe that a European orientation in German policy is either new or difficult for the Germans to accept; unlike Britain, Germany has never had any other area of influence than Europe. To suggest that the country might now turn her back on the EC unless federalism is imposed (a favorite federalist threat) is to fail to grasp that German power is overwhelmingly derived from her position in the EC."[46] Since this dominance is based on superior economic strength, there is no chance of developing a genuinely political counter-power.

This was exactly what the French wanted. Whereas, in a defensive mood, the British pleaded for a Europe, *à la carte* (*The Economist*), leaving to all nations the option to bail out whenever they prefer other alternatives to teutonic happiness, France took the offensive. It assumed that the best way to contain the German threat was "disarming by embedding": "No French official will say so publicly, but Mitterrand is convinced now is the time to pull Germany firmly into the EC's economic and financial embrace; a few years from now it might be too late." Allegedly, the stronger Germany becomes, "the less interest it will have in melding into a European union."[47] Europe has to join the German rise to power in order to control it.

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44. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (December 12, 1991), p. 1.
45. *Die Zeit* (December 15, 1991), p. 19.
46. *The Spectator* (November 30, 1991), p. 9.
47. *Time* (April 22, 1991), p. 23.

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The "Transformational" Therapy

A French expert recently sketched the relevant option as follows: "Either we will get a strong Germany within a divided Europe, or a strong Europe and within it a powerful Germany."[48] If this is correct, then there is *no way* to have a strong Europe without a strong Germany, and just *one way* to have it *with*: stopping, going and "binding Germany in." How can such a policy of becoming attached to the German "locomotive" make real use of Germany's national peculiarities, her economic obsession (the stupidity syndrome) and her political unpredictability (the neurosis complex)? After all, it was this special "country-code" which appalled the "civilized" part of Europe for more than a century. But along with some daydreams some nightmares have also vanished, and today's European power elites no longer see the strategic situation as a zero-sum-game. Integration will transform the system and its parts simultaneously. First, the "Europeanization" of Germany will tame the neurosis by embedding German militancy in a less irritable, less aggressive Europe; second, the "Germanization" of Europe means exploiting stupidity by imposing German competence on less efficient, less systematic neighbors. Together these transformations may one day lead to what has come to be known as "fortress Europe." Those in favor of such an empowerment see it coming just in time to fill the Russian vacuum.

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48. *Time* (December 9, 1991), p. 22.

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Direct Democracy in Western Europe: The Case of Switzerland

Wolfgang Luthardt

Institutions of direct democracy exist in many parts of the world,[1] but most extensively in Switzerland[2] and number of states in the US.[3] Recently such institutions — popular initiative and referenda — have attracted increasing attention in Western Europe. Is this a sign of growing dissatisfaction with representative democracy? Does it signal a shift from the traditional nation-state to more complex political organizations? Is the historical process of European integration into a common

1. Cf. David Butler and Austin Ranney, eds., *Referendums. A Comparative Study of Practice and Theory* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1978); Austin Ranney, ed., *The Referendum Device* (Washington, DC, London: American Enterprise Institute, 1981); Jürgen Gebhardt, "Direkte Demokratie im Vergleich," in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* (APuZG), B 23/91 (31 May 1991), pp. 16-30; Wolfgang Luthardt, "Institutionen direkter Demokratie in der Schweiz und anderen westeuropäischen Staaten — ein empirischer Beitrag zur Demokratietheorie," in *Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen*, No. 1 (1992); Wolfgang Luthardt, "Volksabstimmungen in vergleichender Perspektive," in *Recht und Politik*, No. 1 (1992).

2. For examples of this literature, cf. Leonard Neidhart, *Plebiszit und pluralitäre Demokratie* (Bern: Haupt, 1970); Jürg Steiner, *Amicable Agreement versus Majority Rule: Conflict and Resolution in Switzerland* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1974); Jean-Francois Aubert, "Switzerland," in Butler, Ranney, eds., *Referendums*, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-66; Alois Riklin, *Roland Kley, Stimmabstinenz und direkte Demokratie* (Bern: Haupt, 1981); Hans-Peter Hertig, "Volksabstimmungen," in Ulrich Klöti, ed., *Handbuch des Politischen Systems der Schweiz*, Vol. 2 (Bern: Haupt, 1984), pp. 247-77.

3. For examples on the US case which is not examined in this context, cf. a.o. David B. Magleby, *Direct Democracy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1984); Joseph F. Zimmerman, *Participatory Democracy* (New York etc.: Praeger, 1986); Betty H. Zisk, *Money, Media, and the Grassroots* (Beverly Hills etc.: Sage Publications, 1987); Thomas E. Cronin, *Direct Democracy* (Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press, 1989).

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market, monetary union, and even political unity promoted or obstructed by direct democracy?

In the 19th century Switzerland emulated the US federal system and even "modeled" the Helvetian Federation on it. Similarly, some American states (especially California in the early part of this century) subsequently borrowed institutional models of direct democracy that had been incorporated into the Swiss Federal Constitution in 1874 and 1891 respectively. But today European integration poses a challenge to Switzerland — a challenge even more consequential than the one confronted at the beginning of the Helvetian Federation in 1848.[4] Will the institutions of direct democracy ultimately prove necessary in the new Europe[5] or will the process of European integration transform indigenous Swiss institutions? Will the development of a parliamentary system with representative European institutions require modification of Swiss direct democracy? Today as many people in Switzerland favor representative democracy as others elsewhere in Europe favor direct democracy.[6]

Switzerland: Paradise of Direct Democracy?

The Swiss political process[7] is characterized by a unique way of making decisions: on the one hand, it allows groups excluded or only partially included in the so-called "consociational system"[8] to articulate their interests;[9] on the other, it also allows almost all parliamentary decisions to be submitted to a facultative referendum.[10] At the federal

4. Cf. Neidhart, *Plebiszit und pluralitäre Demokratie*, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

5. Hanspeter Kriesi, "Direkte Demokratie in der Schweiz," in *APuZG*, B 23/91 (1991), p. 54; Alfred Kölz and Jörg Paul Müller, *Entwurf für eine neue Bundesverfassung* (Basel and Frankfurt a/M: Helbing 1990), (2nd ed.).

6. Wolf Linder, "Ausbruch aus institutioneller Verkrustung? Der staatspolitische Sonderfall Schweiz unter Zukunftsdruck," in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (*NZZ*), 31 (Juli 1991), p. 62; Richard Aschinger, "Abschied am Geburtstag — die direkte Demokratie ist nicht eurofähig," in *Tages-Anzeiger*, 7 (January 1991), pp. 30-31. The essential study for this problem is Raimund E. Germann, *Politische Innovation und Verfassungsreform* (Bern: Haupt, 1975).

7. See Jonathan Steinberg, *Why Switzerland?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1987). The Swiss political system is often defined as a unique case (*Sonderfall*) to describe the special political institutions, etc. Cf. Linder, "Ausbruch aus institutioneller Verkrustung?," *op. cit.*, p. 62; cf. also Thomas Fleiner-Gerster, "Plebiszit," in *Staatslexikon* (Freiburg etc.: Herder, 1988); Manfred G. Schmidt, *Der schweizerische Weg zur Vollbeschäftigung* (Frankfurt a/M, New York: Campus, 1985), uses this term with regard to employment policies.

8. Gerhard Lehmbruch, "Consociational Democracy, Class Conflict and the New Corporatism," in Philippe Schmitter, Gerhard Lehmbruch eds. *Trends Toward Corporatist Intermediation* (Beverly Hills and London: Sage, 1986)), pp. 53-61.

9. Hanspeter Kriesi, "Perspektiven neuer Politik: Parteien und neue soziale Bewegungen," in, *Schweizer Jahrbuch für Politische Wissenschaft*, Vol. 26 (1987), p. 342.

10. The facultative referendum is the long standing practice of being able to call for a referendum concerning any particular laws.

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level, then, popular participation and consensual decision is a function of the nature of the issues.[11] When it comes to constitutional changes, popular participation is mandated by law (initiative or obligatory referenda). Whereas facultative referenda are possible for laws passed by the legislature, parliamentary resolutions are not subject to either initiatives or referenda.

This dual institutional structure is legitimated by the primacy of democratic principles over state exigencies.[12] Possible "tensions and conflicts between democratic and state ordinances"[13] are normatively decided in favor of the democratic principle. This democratic principle has been institutionally interpreted and developed with respect to civil[14] and political rights (electoral processes and the like). The latter translate into "popular rights," such as initiatives and referenda, interpreted as "integral parts of the political process."[15] This has led to a "three-tiered system of political representation"[16] and a "political culture permeated by a referendum democracy."[17]

At first glance, institutions of direct democracy appear to be "weapon[s] of the electorate."[18] The basis for such an interpretation is a thesis presupposed by the media (but not necessarily accepted in scholarly discussion):[19] "The government prepares constitutional amendments and laws. Parliament discusses them. But the last word rests with the electorate

11. Cf. Rene A. Rhinow, *Grundprobleme der schweizerischen Demokratie* (Basel: Helbing, Lichtenhain 1984); Wolf Linder, "Integration und Partizipation im politischen System der Schweiz," in Helga Michalsky, ed., *Politischer Wandel in konkordanzdemokratischen Systemen* (Vaduz: Liechtenstein Verlag, 1991), p. 67.

12. Cf. Art. 113, Abs. 3, Swiss Federal Constitution; see also Ulrich Häfelin and Walter Haller, *Schweizerisches Bundesstaatsrecht* (Zürich: 1988) (2nd ed.), pp. 44-45, 174-78.

13. Fritz W. Scharpf: *Die politischen Kosten des Rechtsstaates* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1970), p. 13.

14. Switzerland has a very interesting construct: Swiss citizens are both citizens of their community of birth and citizens of Switzerland.

15. Derek W. Urwin, "The Wearing of the Green: Issues, Movements and Parties," in Derek W. Urwin and William E. Paterson, eds., *Politics in Western Europe Today* (London and New York: Longman, 1990), p. 123.

16. Henry Kerr, "The Swiss Party System: Steadfast and Changing," in Hans Daalder, ed., *Party Systems in Denmark, Austria, Switzerland, The Netherlands and Belgium* (London: Pinter, 1987), p. 112.

17. Gebhardt, "Direkte Demokratie," *op. cit.*, p. 30.

18. Gordon Smith, *Politics in Western Europe* (Aldershot: Gower, 1986) (4th Ed.), p. 127.

19. Cf. Neidhart, *Plebiszit und pluralitäre Demokratie*, *op. cit.*; Germann, *Politische Innovation und Verfassungsreform*, *op. cit.*; Kerr, "The Swiss Party System," *op. cit.*, pp. 113-14; Franz Lehner, "Consociational Democracy in Switzerland," in *European Journal of Political Research*, No. 1 (1984), pp. 25-42; Rene A. Rhinow, *Grundprobleme der schweizerischen Demokratie* (Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn 1984).

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through referendum."[20] More recent research has found the institutions of direct democracy to be somewhat more complex. Thus, Leonard Neidhart has argued that the facultative referendum has been transformed into an "instrument of associational interest formation"[21] — important interest groups and associations can either threaten referenda or actually use them[22] if they find that their interests are not being taken into account.[23] Similarly, Hans Werder[24] has found that popular initiatives have undergone significant functional transformations. Since popular initiatives have to win a majority of the people as well as a majority in the cantons, very few are successful. Yet, the institution has had a positive, if indirect, impact on the whole political system. It has helped implement counter-proposals by the Federal Council (the government).[25] Since 1959 the national government — the *Bundesrat* or Federal Council — has been organized on the basis of proportional representation of the four largest parties according to the formula 2:2:2:1.[26] Since 1984 this "magic formula" has been increasingly criticized, but it is still being followed.

Direct democracy in Switzerland is less limited by institutional hurdles than in other countries. It is, however, limited by historically developed interests and political structures.[27] A variety of groups seem to have access to special privileges and, correspondingly, particular

20. Aubert, "Switzerland," *op. cit.*, p. 65.

21. Neidhart, *Plebiszit und pluralitäre Demokratie*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

22. Cf. François Höpflinger, "Verbände," in Klöti, ed., *Handbuch Politisches System der Schweiz*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 172-73, 176-77.

23. In the "*Vernehmlassungsverfahren*," which is a preparliamentary decision-making procedure, all political and social groups affected by proposed legislation and able to initiate a referendum are heard before the law is passed. These groups can make suggestions for changes and improvements which will be considered, if possible, when the final legislation is written.

24. Cf. Hans Werder, *Die Volksinitiative in der Nachkriegszeit* (Bern: Haupt, 1978); Hertig, "Volksabstimmungen," *op. cit.*; Kriesi, "Direkte Demokratie in der Schweiz," *op. cit.*; Rhinow, *Grundprobleme der schweizerischen Demokratie*, *op. cit.*

25. The idea of the counter-proposal is based on two things. On the one hand, the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*) can abstain from formulating a counter-proposal as a compromise or as an alternative before the referendum takes place, or it can formulate a compromise that incorporates part of the popular initiative. Today voters can vote with a "double yes" for the popular initiative as well as for the government's proposal so that at least the government's compromise proposal has a chance of passing.

26. The four parties are the FDP (*Freisinnige Partei*), the SPS (*Sozialdemokratische Partei*), the CVP (*Christliche Volkspartei*) and, as the smaller coalition partner, the SVP (*Soziale Volkspartei*). The three major parties receive two seats each, the smaller party one in the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*).

27. Hertig, "Volksabstimmungen," *op. cit.*, pp. 255-56.

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interests seem to have direct access to certain institutional means such as the facultative referenda.[28] Thus a considerable number of constraints are embedded in Swiss political system.[29]

In addition to the "cosociational system," direct democracy in Switzerland is institutionalized in the militia and in the federal framework.[30] The militia constitutes a limited form of parliamentarism — a kind of "semi-parliament." It supplements the Swiss parliament, which is neither a full-time nor a professional legislature.[31] Swiss federalism incorporates a relatively high degree of autonomous decision-making in the cantons and the communities, even though there has been a tendency toward an executive federalism concentrating authority at the federal level.

Although political decisions in Switzerland are made through negotiations among a variety of interests, political parties play less a role in referenda than they do in Italy, Denmark, Ireland and Sweden.[32] However, decisions reached by means of direct democracy should not be underestimated. Three examples will suffice. First, in 1938 *Räteromanisch* (the language spoken by the non-German, non-French, non-Italian population) was made the fourth national language (recently there have been efforts to make it the fourth official language).[33] Secondly, in 1986 the proposal to become full member of the United Nations was rejected.[34] And, thirdly, the proposal to abolish the Swiss army in 1989 did not pass.[35]

The recent controversy concerning direct democracy in Switzerland has followed a particular pattern.[36] One side has argued that a significant

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28. Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965).

29. Michael Laver and Norman Schofield, *Multiparty Government. The Politics of Coalition in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 197.

30. Cf. Ulrich Klöti, "Einleitung," in Ulrich Klöti, ed., *Handbuch politisches System der Schweiz*, Vol. 2, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-18.

31. Recent discussions have proposed a move toward a professional and full-time parliament to deal more adequately with complex political decisions.

32. Cf. Ulrich Klöti and Franz Xaver Risi, "Zum Vergleich: Neueste Entwicklungslinien im Parteiensystem der Schweiz," in Anton Pelinka and Fritz Plasser, eds., *Das österreichische Parteiensystem* (Wien etc.: Böhlau, 1988), pp. 727-28.

33. Cf. Iso Camartin, *Von Sils-Maria aus betrachtet. Ausblicke vom Dach Europas* (Frankfurt a/M: 1991), pp. 126-135.

34. Cf. Luzius Wildhaber, "Das Schweizer Nein zu einer Vollmitgliedschaft in den Vereinten Nationen," in *Europa Archiv*, Folge 15 (1986), pp. 461ff.

35. Cf. Marko Milivojevic, "The Swiss Referendum of 1989," in *Electoral Studies*, No. 3 (1990), pp. 257ff; Claude Longchamp, "Analyse der eidgenössischen Abstimmung vom 26 November 1989," in *VOX*, Publikation Nr. 38 (März 1990).

36. For a summary of the discussion, see Rhinow, *Grundprobleme der schweizerischen Demokratie*, *op. cit.*; Erich Gruner, "Die direkte Demokratie in der Bewährungsprobe,"

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transformation and/or reduction of direct democracy is necessary. Thus, Raimund Germann has called for structural modifications towards a bi-polar political system.[37] Similarly, Leonard Neidhart has argued that direct democracy may be archaic and inadequate for dealing with increasing political complexities.[38] It has even been suggested that facultative referenda be eliminated. The other side, however, proposes an expansion of direct democracy at the federal level. Thus, Alfred Kölz advocates the implementation of administrative referenda[39] and, along with Jörg Paul Müller, has proposed that, on the federal level, legislative initiatives be incorporated in the constitution.[40]

Direct Democracy in the EC

This internal Swiss debate has been triggered by external developments such as possible Swiss membership in the EC. Those who advocate a bi-polar political system[41] call for "fresh air from Europe."[42] Others claim that EC membership would not require any internal institutional changes. The relation between Switzerland and Europe is often expressed as follows: Switzerland supports "strengthening of parliament and the creation of direct democratic forms of decision-making."[43] The implication here is that Switzerland should export its institutions of direct democracy.[44] But this overlooks the complexity of processes of institutional adjustment, opportunities for compromise and decision-making, as well as necessary coordination efforts.

Yet, some political decisions in particular EC states are already routinely made by means of direct democracy. Thus in Italy, relevant issues such as divorce, abortion, party financing, the elimination of nuclear

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in Wolf Linder, ed., *Abstimmungen und Wahlen, Schweizerisches Jahrbuch für Politische Wissenschaft*, Vol. 27 (1987), pp. 283-313.

37. Cf. Germann, *Politische Innovation und Verfassungsreform*, *op. cit.*

38. Cf. Leonard Neidhart, "Regierbarkeitsfragen in der direkten Demokratie," in *Schweizerisches Jahrbuch für Politische Wissenschaft*, Vol. 23 (1983).

39. Cf. Alfred Kölz, "Ausbau des Verwaltungsreferendums?," in *Schweizerische Juristen-Zeitung*, No. 4 (1981), pp. 53ff.

40. Cf. Alfred Kölz and Jörg Paul Müller, *Entwurf für eine neue Bundesverfassung* (Basel and Frankfurt a/M: 1990) (2nd ed.).

41. Cf. Raimund E. Germann, "Bundesverfassung und 'Europafähigkeit' der Schweiz," in Thomas Ellwein, Joachim Jens Hesse, Renate Mayntz and Fritz W. Scharpf, eds., *Jahrbuch zur Staats- und Verwaltungswissenschaft*, Vol. 4 (Baden-Baden: 1990), pp. 297ff.

42. Cf. Hans Peter Fagagnini, "Bedrohung der direkten Demokratie oder Frischluft aus Europa?," in *Schweizer Monatshefte*, No. 2 (1991), pp. 136ff.

43. Cf. Kölz and Müller, *Entwurf für eine neue Bundesverfassung*, *op. cit.*, p. 41 (Art. 113, Abs. 4).

44. Kriesi, "Direkte Demokratie in der Schweiz," *op. cit.*, p. 54.

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power plants and hunting laws have been decided by means of referenda.[45] Similarly, there have been referenda on moral issues in Ireland (abortion, 1983; divorce, 1986).[46] Recent debates concerning the reform of the Italian political system[47] have also emphasized the need to increase opportunities for direct popular participation.[48] In 1980 Sweden held a referendum concerning limiting the length of time nuclear power plants could be operated,[49] and Spain held one concerning whether to join NATO in 1986.[50] In both Sweden and Austria a number of popular initiatives — independent of government and political parties — have contributed to the decision-making process. Most of all, Denmark has seen a relatively wide use of direct democracy (e.g., several decisions concerning lowering the voting age).[51]

In the 1960s, at the end of the Algerian War, France also witnessed a number of plebiscites. Elsewhere in the 1970s important popular decisions (in different institutional forms) were made regarding expansion of the EC (Norway: negative; Denmark: positive) and concerning whether to remain in the EC (England). Referenda motivated by separatism or

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45. In this context, different camps can be clearly identified, especially with regard to moral issues (e.g., the Christian Democrats and the Catholic Church, feminist groups and popular initiatives). Cf. Martin Clark, David Hine and R.E.M. Irving, "Divorce — Italian Style," in *Parliamentary Affairs*, No. 4 (1974), pp. 333ff; Alberto Marradi, "Italy's Referendum Divorce: Survey and Ecological Evidence Analyzed," in *European Journal of Political Research*, No. 1 (1976), pp. 115ff; David Hine, "The Italian Referendums of 8/9 November 1987," in *Electoral Studies*, No. 2, pp. 163ff; Pier Vincenzo Uleri, "The Deliberative Initiative of June 1985 in Italy," in *Electoral Studies*, No. 3 (1985), pp. 271ff; Pier Vincenzo Uleri, "The 1987 referendum," in Robert Leonardi and Piergiorgio Corbetta, eds., *Italian Politics: A Review*, Vol. 3 (London and New York: 1987), pp. 155ff.

46. Cf. Brian Girvin, "Social Change and Moral Politics: The Irish Constitutional Referendum 1983," in *Political Studies*, No. 1 (1986), pp. 61ff; John Coakley, "Moral Consensus in a Secularising Society: The Irish Divorce Referendum of 1986," in *West European Politics*, No. 2 (1987), pp. 291ff.

47. Cf. Michael Kreile, "Die Reform der staatlichen Institutionen in Italien: Symbolische Politik und parlamentarischer Prozeß," in *Zparl*, No. 4 (1987), pp. 573ff.

48. Cf. Michael Kreile, *Italien vor den Wahlen*, Ms. (1991), p. 5.

49. Cf. Robert S. Sahr, *The Politics of Energy Policy Change in Sweden* (Ann Arbor: 1985), pp. 180f, 189f; Örjan Hultaker, "A Referendum on the Future of Nuclear Power: The Case of Sweden," in *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1984), pp. 165ff.

50 The referendum in Sweden was influenced by the 1978 Zwentendorf decision in Austria and the 1979 Three Mile Island accident in Pennsylvania. Cf. Anthony Gooch, "A Surrealistic Referendum: Spain and NATO," in *Government and Opposition*, No. 3 (1986), pp. 300ff; Carles Boix and James Alt, "Partisan Voting in the Spanish 1986 NATO Referendum: An Ecological Analysis," in *Electoral Studies*, No. 1 (1991), pp. 18ff.

51. Cf. Borklund, "The Demand for Referendum ; Sten Sparre Nilson, Scandinavia," in Butler and Ranney, eds., *Referendums*, p. 169ff.

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ethnic-territorial issues have been held in Scotland and Wales and in several regionas in Spain. In Switzerland an ethnic language referendum in 1978 accompanied the founding of the Jura canton.

Elements of a "New Pluralism"? The German Case

Direct democracy in the form of plebiscites, referenda, popular initiatives and direct presidential elections were incorporated into the Weimar Constitution in 1919.[52] They referred back to earlier discussions held in connection with the 1848 Constitution. The Social Democrats, who in 1919 opted for democratic republicanism, made specific reference in several party programs to popular initiatives and referenda as legitimate, if marginal, political instruments.[53] Two main arguments were decisive for the inclusion of such devices within the Constitution. First, it was held to be self-evident that democracy as a legal form should have the political means to inquire directly concerning the people's will and to allow the people's active participation.[54] Second, such means were considered necessary for institutionalizing "constitutional counterweights" (Max Weber) against possible rule by parliament and political parties.

After 1945 it was argued that direct democracy had contributed to undermining the Weimar Republic. As a result, at that time particular attention was paid to the stability of representative political institutions. This stability was considered inherently valuable, irrespective of specific social developments. During the deliberations of the Parliamentary Council prior to the establishment of the so-called Basic Law (the Constitution) of the Federal Republic of Germany, the "bad" Weimar experiences of Weimar were said to have shown that instruments of direct democracy were "bonuses for demagogues."[55] This claim has been

52. Cf. Reinhold Schiffers, *Elemente direkter Demokratie im Weimarer Regierungssystem* (Düsseldorf: 1971), pp. 17ff.

53. Cf. Ernst Fraenkel, *Deutschland und die westlichen Demokratien, Neuausgabe*, ed. by Alexander v. Brünneck (Frankfurt a/M: 1991), pp. 190f; Schiffers, *Elemente direkter Demokratie*, *op. cit.*, pp. 23ff; Horst Ehmke, "Eine alte Frage neu gestellt. Zur Diskussion um die Einführung von Volksabstimmungen," in *Die neue Gesellschaft*, (Frankfurter Hefte), Nr. 4, 1988, pp. 237ff.

54. This was heavily criticized by Ernst Fraenkel. Cf. Fraenkel *Deutschland und die westlichen Demokratien*, *op. cit.* p. 194ff.; Schiffers, *Elemente direkter Demokratie*, *op. cit.*; Otmar Jung, *Direkte Demokratie in der Weimarer Republik* (Frankfurt a/M and New York: 1989).

55. A study on the Young-Referendum in 1929 is Volker R. Berghahn, "Das Volksbegehren gegen den Young-Plan und die Ursprünge des Präsidialregimes, 1928-1930," in Dirk Stegmann, Bernd-Jürgen Wendt and Peter-Christian Witt, eds., *Industrielle Gesellschaft und politisches System. Festschrift für Fritz Fischer zum siebzigsten Geburtstag* (Bonn: 1978), pp. 431ff.

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challenged on the ground that "reasons for the German failure are not to be found in the idea of popular rights themselves, but rather in the way they were incorporated in the constitutional structure."[56]

At any rate, since the early 1980s there has been a marked increase of interest in direct democracy in Germany.[57] After November 1989 opposition groups in the East demanded the incorporation of referenda, plebiscites and popular initiatives into the new political system. In both German states there was considerable controversy over the best political and institutional way to bring about unification.[58] The April 1990 Round Table draft of the Constitution spoke of some instruments of direct democracy. Whether reunification will ultimately require a new constitution and, with it, a referendum remains unclear.

"Bringing the People Back In"[59]

This is the current political slogan accompanying demands for more direct democracy in Germany — and even more so in Austria.[60] Two political events in the 1970s and 1980s have enlivened political debates in Austria. One was the controversy concerning the only nuclear power plant in Austria (Zwentendorf). The first major public discussion in 1978 was resumed in 1985 before the Konrad Lorenz plebiscite on this issue. The conflict over the construction of the power plant near Hainburg is sometimes interpreted as one between two contrary economic logics of growth: the traditional pro-growth logic and the post-material alternative concerned with ecological issues. Unlike the German Constitution, the

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56. Karl Neumeyer, "Betrachtungen zum Volksinitiativverfahren im Staatsrecht der Länder des deutschen Sprachgebietes ausserhalb der Schweiz," in *Melanges Marcel Briedel* (Lausanne: 1968), pp. 321ff, 321f.

57. Cf. Wolfgang Luthardt, "Instrumente direkter Demokratie — Bereicherung der Interessenvermittlung?," in Hans-Dieter Klingemann and Wolfgang Luthardt, eds., *Wohlfahrtsstaat, Sozialstruktur und Verfassungsanalyse* (Opladen: 1992) (forthcoming).

58. Cf. Gerhard Lehmbruch, "The Institutional Reconstruction of East Germany," Revised version of a paper presented at the conference "European Transitions," University of Wisconsin, Madison, 4 May 1991; Klaus v. Beyme, "The Legitimation of German Unification between National and Democratic Principles," in *German Politics and Society* (Spring 1991), pp. 1ff.

59. Cf. Wolfgang Luthardt, "The Demand for Referenda in West Germany. 'Bringing the People Back In?'," Working paper, 90-21, Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1990.

60. Cf. among others: Joseph Marko, "Direkte Demokratie im Vergleich: Schweiz — Österreich — Bundesrepublik Deutschland," in Joseph Marko and Armin Stolz, eds., *Demokratie und Wirtschaft* (Wien and Köln: Graz, 1987), pp. 11ff; Heinz Fischer, "Die plebiszitäre Komponente in den Verfassungen Österreichs, der Schweiz und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," in Annemarie Renger, Carola Stern and Hertha Däubler-Gmelin, eds., *Festschrift für Claus Arndt zum 60. Geburtstag* (Heidelberg: 1987), pp. 23ff.

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Austrian one allows for rudimentary plebiscites[61] which have been held several times since 1964.[62] Thus far, however, the so-called Zwentendorf vote has been the only successful popular referendum in Austria.[63]

Since the early 1980s there has been increasing debate in both Austria and Germany regarding the introduction of direct democratic institutions by the Peace Movement, the Greens and the Social Democrats.[64] German legal scholars have argued that this change would substantially strengthen the democratic principle,[65] that decisions made in this manner would have an "added value."[66] Allegedly the implementation of these reforms would strengthen democracy by encouraging the citizens' participation in public affairs.[67]

Calls for direct democracy in Austria and Germany are aimed primarily at two political phenomena. The first is the omnipotence of large political parties, which has been characterized as a "cartel situation."[68] The second is that the decision-making process is concerned almost exclusively with majority representation and neglects the social periphery, thus excluding new actors. The upshot is that established procedures leave no room for new political dynamics and that citizens are less subjects of a democratic polity than objects of a system of legitimation.

In Austria various popular initiatives have been launched since the Zwentendorf referendum during the "small" government coalition between the Social Democrats and the Freedom Party. The opposition Austrian People's Party increasingly attempted to gain popular support

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61. Cf. Manfried Welan, "Regierungssystem und direkte Demokratie in Österreich," in Friedrich Koja and Gerald Stourzh, eds., *Schweiz — Österreich. Ähnlichkeiten und Kontraste* (Wien and Köln: Graz, 1986), pp. 177ff.

62. Cf. Anton Pelinka and Fritz Plasser, eds., *Das Österreichische Parteiensystem* (Wien and Köln: Graz, 1988), pp. 786f.

63. Cf. Pelinka and Plasser, ed., *Das Österreichische Parteiensystem*, *op. cit.*, p. 785.

64. For some suggestions, see Wolfgang Luthardt, "Parlamentarische Demokratie, Formen direkter Demokratie, Partizipation," in *Recht und Politik* (*RuP*), No. 1 (1988), pp. 40ff; Wolfgang Luthardt, "Sozialdemokratie und direkte Demokratie. Wiederentdeckung des Bürgers?," in *RuP*, No. 2 (1991), pp. 80ff.

65. Ekkehart Stein, "Kommentierung Art. 20 Abs. 1-3 II (Demokratie)," in Axel Azzola u.a., *Kommentar für das Grundgesetz der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 2 Bde., 2. Aufl., Neuwied (Darmstadt: 1989), Vol. 1, p. 1334.

66. Hans-Herbert v. Arnim, "Entmündigen die Parteien das Volk?," in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B 21/1990 (18. Mai 1990), p. 34.

67. Cf. Werner Maihofer, "Abschließende Äußerungen," in Ernst Benda, Werner Maihofer and Hans-Jochen Vogel, eds., *Handbuch des Verfassungsrechts* (Berlin and New York: 1983), pp. 1381ff.

68. On the critique of the German party system, see Wolfgang Luthardt, " 'Krise' der Volksparteien — oder 'Differenzierung' und 'Verfestigung' im bundesdeutschen Parteiensystem?," in *Journal für Sozialforschung*, No. 2 (1991), pp. 127-45.

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by endorsing institutions of direct democracy. Aside from the claim that more popular participation was necessary, it viewed these institutions as appropriate for party activities *vis-à-vis* the governing coalition. The Social Democrats opposed expansion of the institutional framework at the federal level, but were more forthcoming with regard to reforms favoring the extension of direct democracy within the *Länder* constitutions. This restraint stemmed primarily from the fact that the Austrian Social Democrats, like their German counterparts, see themselves as the guardians of parliamentary-representative political institutions.

Demands for more direct democracy in Germany have been made in the 1980s primarily by the new Peace Movement. It was subsequently taken up by different popular initiatives (particularly by the Greens) and it became an indicator of reform and progress of West German democracy. Since then the Social Democrats (SPD) have jumped on the bandwagon. But other parties, such as the Christian Democrats (CDU) and the Christian Social Democrats (CSU), still seem unreceptive, even though certain exceptions can be detected in actual political life, such as an occasional argument for direct democratic institutions within some of the *Länder* constitutions.[69] How can the Christian Democrats' and the Christian Socialists' position be explained? On the one hand, a party belonging to the governing coalition is not likely to deploy political institutions which do not automatically bring about favorable political results — the "opposition function" of some forms of direct democracy tends to belie a simple instrumentalization. On the other, both parties are *de jure* committed to representative political institutions — although they have occasionally *de facto* been part of organized political processes of direct democracy or have voiced demands along those lines.

European Integration and Direct Democracy

From an institutional perspective, European integration entails a loss of control for national political institutions, and this loss of national autonomy corresponds to a relative strengthening of European institutions. Without this reciprocity, the process would be meaningless and European institutions would become the objects of national experiments and electoral calculations. However, the loss of control by national political institutions needs to be balanced by simultaneous processes of substitution. In this regard, formulas such as "A Europe of Regions"

69. Cf. Albrecht Weber, "Direkte im Landesverfassungsrecht," in *Die Öffentliche Verwaltung*, No. 5 (1985), p. 178ff; Arthur Gunlicks, *Elections in Germany and the United States at Local, State and National Levels: Too Much or Too Little Democracy?*, Ms. (1991).

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are crucial. More supra-national decision-making corresponds to more complex political institutions on the national, communal and local levels. A stronger federalization offers the possibility of incorporating different patterns of decision-making into various institutional contexts and the strengthening of those already in existence. Institutions of direct democracy could thus mediate decision-making processes and increase social integration. In this respect, a unified Europe presents a political and institutional laboratory for new political processes.

At any rate, the following is clear: 1)There is growing interest in institutions of direct democracy in Western Europe — especially in Germany, Austria and Italy. The objective is greater citizen participation as an antitode against increasingly aloof and unresponsive representational patterns of decision-making and the omnipotence of political parties. 2) Current discussions in Switzerland point not only to various ways in which these institutions of direct democracy can work, but also to the extent that they can be instrumentalized by established political brokers and various interest groups. These discussions indicate how the traditional democratic ideal of popular rights can degenerate into politics-as-usual through the actual workings of these instruments. However, this does not invalidate the usefulness of institutions of direct democracy in principle. It only highlights the need to determine more directly constitutional and participatory choices. 3) The Swiss model of direct democracy cannot simply be transposed to Europe in the sense of a simple transfer of institutions. A large region such as Europe needs representative decision-making institutions in order to be able to reach decisions. 4) European integration[70] involves an institutional and political dynamic that will lead to a European political system considerably more complex than hitherto assumed.[71]

Institutions of direct democracy in general, and the Swiss system in particular, will be have no trouble adjusting to this broader political context. Looking at the new Europe as a political and institutional laboratory, it is clear that its "mix of institutions"[72] can hardly afford to neglect the rich variety of political forms in different national political systems.

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70. The process of European integration itself was legitimated in some countries through referenda. Cf. Wolfgang Luthardt, "Direkte Demokratie und Europäische Integration," in *Schweizerisches Jahrbuch für Politische Wissenschaft*, Vol. 32, (1992), (forthcoming).

71. Wolfgang Streeck and Philippe C. Schmitter, "From National Corporatism to Transnational Pluralism: Organized Interests in the Single European Market," in *Politics and Society*, No. 2, 1991, pp. 150ff.

72. Ulrich Klöti, "Brauchen Kleinstaaten Konkordanzmodelle?" in *Politischer Wandel in konkordanzdemokratischen Systemen*, ed. by Helga Michalsky (Vaduz: 1991), p. 128.

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The New Political Economy of Central Europe

Miron Wolnicki

The key to understanding the transformation in Eastern Europe lies in the new political economy, i.e., the way the societies produce, allocate resources, distribute income, and find political consensus and social stability. Considering the situation of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, the only political economic model realistically within reach is some kind of "social market economy."[1] Eastern Europe must be prepared to reconcile inherent statism and politicized trade unions with aggressive entrepreneurship.[2] Not surprisingly, East European theorists are becoming increasingly interested in Ludwig Erhard, the forefather of German economic reform. In the 15 years following the 1948 reforms, Erhard proceeded to construct a system able to reconcile two seemingly incompatible ingredients: the market and "social justice."[3] Eastern Europe would like to emulate the Erhardian brew of Catholic thinking, trade-union doctrines and belief that the market itself could resolve all social problems if allowed to generate sufficient growth. Although the post-WWII social climate has been very different from that of the 1990s, for Poland and other East European countries, the Erhardian reform model may bear some relevance. First, it is based on a coexistence of a comprehensive social package and anti-monopoly, regulated market policies, on the one hand, and free price formation and genuine competition, on the other. Second, it proves that

1. Ralf Dahrendorf, *Reflections on Revolutions in Europe* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1990), p. 40ff.
2. "What will become of the USSR and Eastern Europe?" Editorial in *Bloc* (March/April 1991), p. 12.
3. Dahrendorf, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

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entrepreneurship is possible in a country with strong unions. Third, it legitimates the costs of a capitalist alternative as the sacrifices needed to bring about a genuine welfare state.

The main barrier to replicating the Erhard solution in Eastern Europe is the absence of sizable Western assistance. After all, it was only the Marshall Plan and the American strategy of strengthening its West European flank which made Erhard's privatization and anti-inflationary plan work. Erhard skillfully directed American non-repayable grants to expand small and medium-sized firms, promote exports and strengthen the Mark. In doing so he managed to rebuild and expand the private sector and the middle class as the foundations for future mass production and investment. Besides direct assistance, Allied forces aided local industries with consumer spending and military procurement. Most importantly, however, American business and technology followed the flag equipped with Washington's blessing, low-cost loans and tax incentives at home.

In contrast, Washington decided in 1989 that Western Europe was a low priority. Initially, Bush decided to avoid acknowledging the strategic windfall *vis à vis* Moscow so as not to embarass Gorbachev in the eyes of Kremlin hard-liners. Subsequently, US budgetary deficits and lingering recession brought about the decision to "Europeanize" assistance to the East. Three years after the revolutions, the chances for greater government-to-government assistance are very small as East European requests compete with those of the former Soviet Union.

No matter how ingenious the Balcerowicz or Klaus economic plans have been, without sufficient Western financing and technology Eastern Europe's road to capitalism will be long and bumpy because embryonic capitalism appeals neither to unions nor producers, nor even to consumers. The support Balcerowicz received from Solidarity, similar to that which Erhard received from German unions, disappeared as soon as cuts in subsidies and anti-inflationary taxes were introduced. Private producers such as farmers and craftsmen, who had prior experience operating in the marketplace and who could particularly benefit from a free market, are not satisfied either. In the past, thanks to bureaucratic restrictions on potential competitors, they enjoyed monopolistic profits and huge markets. Real competition, however, presented them with unwanted challenges.[4]

4. Wladyslaw W. Jermakowicz, *Germany's 1949 Currency Reform and Poland's 1990 Shock Reform: A Compararative Analysis after One Year* (Köln: Bundesinstitut für Ostwissenschaftliche und International Studien, 1991), p. 28.

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Food coupons, bread-lines and assorted shortages are easily forgotten; plentiful supplies of goods at "astronomical" prices irritate consumers on an average monthly income of $170 just as much as empty shelves. While free prices evoked an entrepreneurial spirit among the young, the bureaucratic middle class and large-industry workers faulted the government for the destruction of their mediocre security. A total of 57% of the voters ignored the first free elections to the Seym. The others spread their votes among democrats (UD), former communists (SdRP), extremist nationalists (KPN), ruling liberals (KLD) the Catholic Party (ZchN) and the main post-Solidarity faction (PC). This should serve as a warning to Europeans, especially in view of the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

The Political Economy of Privatization

Capitalist development in Eastern Europe must begin with the denationalization of industry: massive privatization, primitive accumulation of capital, a technological and industrial revolution and formation of a strong export sector. Rostow once estimated that in Western Europe this growth pattern took place over the course of a century, while the Asian "Newly Industrialized Countries" (NIC) did it in less than a quarter of that time.[5] Yet, unlike the Asian NICs, the young democracies in Eastern Europe have to overcome the legacy of strong unions, internalized social expectations and lack of private property.

In principle, most property belonged indivisibly and collectively to "the people." Now it has to be reapportioned. How can this be achieved? Three basic methods have been proposed. One is simply to auction off state property to the highest bidder, as was abortively proposed in 1990. The second, is to lend equal amounts of money to all who would like to become dispersed shareholders of state property entrusted for the time being in a few professionally managed mutual funds. The third, proposed by the Czech Finance Minister, Vaclav Klaus, calls for an equal distribution of state property through individually purchased vouchers among those disenfranchized by communism.

The Polish solution aroused widespread fear of foreign domination. While Western investors avoided buying into union-run enterprises, thousands of small firms in turn avoided foreign ownership. The threat of auctioning off the national wealth to foreigners led to restrictions

5. Walter W. Rostow, "The Stages of Economic Growth," in *Economic History Review* (August 1959), pp. 36-40ff.

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of foreign ownership to less than 10% of privatized enterprises. Coupled with a mandated preferential sale of up to 20% of enterprise shares to workers, this xenophobic approach decreased Western capital's enthusiasm for investing in Poland.[6] The main fear is that foreigners will take over the healthiest enterprises, while potentially viable state firms end up out of business for lack of buyers.[7] All of this is further complicated by the difficulties in estimating the worth of the state enterprises which have been sustained by a "lunar" socialist accounting system and state subsidies.

A variation of this method applied to smaller enterprises is what became known as "spontaneous privatization." Accordingly, existing managers and workers are given ownership of the firm. The trouble is that such a solution leads to an uncontrollable distribution of windfall prizes to former *nomenklatura* managers aware of which chunks of the enterprise are most profitable. The *nomenklatura* joint ventures with which the former party members parachuted into the private sector generated considerable criticism of former Prime Minister Mazowiecki and contributed to his government's downfall.[8] His liberal successor, Bielecki, failed to privatize more than a few products of the socialist industrial gigantomania. Of the 400 largest enterprises, only 6 went public by the end of 1991. Many of them continue receiving government subsidies while awaiting a foreclosure decision.

The privatization process has revealed a new socio-economic law of post-communism: economic freedom in the state sector unleashes self-destructive mechanisms. The viability of state enterprises has been steadily declining because the *nomenklatura* tend to choose bankruptcy as the shortest way to grab the best assets at the lowest price. So far no credible mechanism for the privatization of small and medium-sized holdings has been discovered.

In Poland, Balcerowicz consistently avoided creating phantom ownership. He had opposed Walesa's Robin Hoodism, i.e., a proposition to lend at very preferential rates the equivalent of $10,000 to every citizen to purchase a piece of state property of their choice. Instead, the

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6. Expectations that Germans would use their economic strength to buy Polish land and assets in Silesia and former Eastern Prussia played no small role in placing legal restrictions on foreign investments. Cf. Roman Frydman and Andrzej Rapaczynski, "On Privatizing Privatization: A New Proposal of Ownership Transformation in Poland," in *Res Publica* (September 1990), pp. 43ff.

7. Jacek Tittenbaum, "Sprzeczńosci Prywatyzacji," in *Polityka* (May 13, 1991), p. 7.

8. Grzegorz T. Jedrzejczak, "Privatization and the Private Sector," in George Blazyca and Ryszard Rapacki, eds., *Poland into the 1990's: Economy in Transition* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), pp. 95ff.

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government created some privileges for new joint ventures and small entrepreneurs. It assumes that those enterprises surviving a 70% interest rate and recessionary market have passed the best test of viability. Output from this new sector is rising, but not fast enough to absorb growing unemployment and pay for the budgetary gap with new taxes.

Klaus' proposal to distribute equal value vouchers to all adult citizens, which could then be exchanged for the stock of state enterprises, retains something of the original promise of socialism by privatizing in a manner that broadly distributes ownership. Unlike the proposal of turning enterprises over to their employees, this would diversify risk as well as ownership and, instead of putting enterprises up for bidding, would spread the wealth. However, substituting state ownership with collective peoples' capitalism is questionable. First, the proposed system does not create identifiable, profit-oriented owners out of thousands of phantom shareholders. Second, a speculative secondary market for privatization vouchers may lead to a catastrophic oversupply of money substitutes and hyperinflation. Third, giving away privatization vouchers means forsaking potential capital accumulation which is needed for new capital investment.

Jeffrey Sachs, whose views strongly influenced the Balcerowicz reforms, favors a distribution of shares to workers, households and financial institutions.[9] Janos Kornai, on the other hand, prefers a mix of methods including stock companies, family firms and cooperatives.[10] Kornai's idealistic and Gandhian proposal is rooted in the Hungarian agricultural and food processing experience. He is probably the only East European economist who believes that indigenous savings would suffice to rebuild the post-communist economy.

The real economic transformation of Eastern Europe cannot be accomplished without Western capital, technology and know-how. Undoubtedly, the best solution would be a massive assistance program reminiscent of the Marshall Plan. Instead, Eastern Europe has begun laborious bargaining for capital and markets from the client's position

9. Jeffrey Sachs, *Privatization is Top Priority in Eastern Europe* (Washington, DC: IMF Survey, May 1991), pp. 161ff.

10. Janos Kornai, *The Road to a Free Economy* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990), pp. 206ff. Kornai believes that only a strong government can implement the economic policy of market transformation, market prices, hard budgeting, real interest rates and do away with subsidies. "The government must quell, within its own ranks, the insolence that hinders the development of the private sector. It should firmly implement the fiscal and monetary policy Parliament lays down, and secure financial and wage discipline" (p. 206).

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with few chips at hand. However, neither would the IMF relax lending conditions for communist bashers, nor would the European Community remove major protectionist barriers to support their exports and source of funds with which they could gain access to Western technology markets. The Western governments' bureaucratic maze of conditions limits the usefulness of many proudly offered assistance programs. Most of them designate a spending authority in a donor country to pay exorbitant fees to consulting firms and finance armies of exploratory missions with no follow-up, meaningless seminars and conferences and training programs in which teachers learn more than students.

A possible alternative to meager official Western assistance would be a massive sellout of all idled and undervalued assets to Western private and corporate investors and a *de facto* acceptance of voluntary Western "colonization" of a number of industries. This process could take the form of a debt-for-equity swap, i.e., offering a country's assets in exchange for debt reduction. In Mexico, the "*Maquiladoras*" program reduced debt by about $40 billion and provided jobs in American and Japanese owned industries for 13% of the labor force. Would East Europeans accept such a solution to lower the social cost of reform?

Perhaps the strongest barrier to accepting such an alternative is defensive protectionism. Polish insistence on obtaining asymmetric treatment in the Association Agreement with the European Community is but one attempt to buy time for obsolete indigenous banking, insurance, transport and telecommunications to compete with West European conglomerates. Similar actions to protect national control over the economy's vital sectors have taken place in Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

The source of East European protectionism is the fear of losing economic, and eventually political, sovereignty. Idiosyncrasies born out of the bitter experiences of the two world wars and Soviet communism are perhaps too strong to permit German repurchase of Silesia or Pomerania. However, a distinct nationalistic element in current systemic revolutions is neither xenophobic nor inward-looking. East Europeans are not generally opposed to foreign capital, employers or economic advisers. Opposition will decrease over time along with a lot of image building by potential investors and the governments.

The lessons learned from the first two years of privatization are sobering for those in the fast lane. First, it is now clear that there cannot be a single method of denationalization. Second, the role of foreign capital has been much smaller than expected. Third, no matter how Eastern Europe chooses to privatize its assets, this kind of peoples' capitalism will need time to be tested, since no one knows whether it can work.

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The Political Market

The new task consists in getting the government out of production so it can be subjected to market forces and undertake a socially risky transition from a mediocre socialist egalitarianism to an affordable welfare state. The process of substituting even distribution of poverty with uneven distribution of wealth presents a political dilemma: how to elicit the support of the people who, despite resenting communism, still expect extensive state responsibility for its citizens?

The question concerning the long term winners and losers in the marketplace of political ideas is related to the question of who will support the new system. In the post-communist world, liberals, Social emocrats and conservative Christian Democrats will have to seek a social consensus able to endure wide swings of the political pendulum as East Europeans confront budgetary debates, new tax and welfare policies and unemployment.[11]

The Balcerowicz and Klaus plans involved jump-starting economies whose batteries have been low for a long time. If along this path opposition arises, it will be about the social costs of the projects. The wave of strikes and demonstrations which took place in April and May of 1991 in Poland and former East Germany as well as the results of the October elections in Poland signaled a shift in public acceptance of "shock therapy." Popular perceptions of social justice have not changed very much. Full employment, subsidized apartments, free education and medical care are still considered the people's inalienable rights. Tyminski won a surprisingly high level of support against Walesa and Mazowiecki by criticizing liberal reformers for violating those unrealistic "minimum social provisions." There is nothing unusual about demagogues promising wealth without sacrifice, preaching xenophobia and warning against external threats. Yet the unexpected coalition of disgruntled workers and former *nomenklatura* members surprised many Western scholars who had naively projected the development of a utopian "civil society" with rational economic reforms.[12] Both disappointed workers and former *nomenklatura* members found themselves on the same side of "we" against the government's "they" and are unable or unwilling to shed old communist style politics.[13] The resurgence of

11. Krzysztof Pomian, "Religion and Politics in the ime of *Glasnost*," in *Restructuring Eastern Europe: Towards a New European Order*, ed. by Ronald J. Hill and Jan Zielonka (Vermont: Edward Elgar Publishing Company, 1990), p. 125.

12. Cf. Ferenc Feher and Andrew Arato, eds., *Crisis and Reform in Eastern Europe* (New Brunswick: Transition Publishers, 1991).

13. Adam Michnik, editorial in *Gazeta Wyborcza* (May 13, 1991).

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strikes as a form of pressure on the governments in Germany and Poland indicates that the methods used to fight communists remain unchanged and that the goodwill earned by anti-communists may be running out. While xenophobic and charismatic leaders will be tempted to cater to the opponents of the liberal reforms, the real solution is likely to come from the countervailing power of small landowners and new "bourgeois parties."

Everywhere in Eastern Europe the state, extremely weakened by communist rule and rebuilt from its very foundations by populist movements, is faced with the Church or churches more powerful than ever. The interplay of these antagonists-turned-allies in a crucial period of establishing the new legal order and new institutional structures is determining the social and political regime. Religion reaffirmed the important link of national, ethnic and cultural identity. Such religious frontiers between Catholics and Protestants divide Hungarians and Czechs from Slovaks. Abortion and school catechism issues divide liberals, democrats and Catholic conservatives in Hungary and Czechoslovakia where, even though the Church's behavior is less triumphalistic and more cautious than in Poland, it may nonetheless be impossible in the near future to implement any measures without Church support.[14]

In Poland the Church already openly intervenes in politics, instructing voters and eliciting support for its own conservative party candidates. In the new Seym, the Church's deputies decry abortion and lay education as well as unemployment and the destruction of the social welfare system. Thousands of new churches built across the country not only reaffirm devotion but prove the good economic standing of many local parishes in a time of general economic decline. The Church's political and economic role is likely to increase even more after the April 1992 Pope's bulla, which named 13 new bishops and 7 new dioceses to oversee thousands of new smaller parishes. Consequently, a more evangelical Catholic Church may prefigure localized socio-economic organizations with a high degree of independence and local influence. The examples may come from some Polish immigrant parishes which managed to establish powerful national, cultural and educational associations. The Church, however, may have already become too strong and too politicized for its own sake. The political role

14. Adam Michnik, "Dlaczego nie bede glosowac na Walese?," in *Dziennik Polski* (New York, November 13, 1990).

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of the Church will grow proportionately to the deepening social discontent with "shock therapy," its presence in media broadcasts, publishing and its ability to finance conservative party structures. Eventually, the politicized Church is likely to bring about a coalition of right and center in a powerful Christian Democratic party dwarfing all fictionalized remnants of Solidarity.

Politicians and the Electorate

While some members of the former opposition have adopted a populist outlook, most intellectuals have had a hard time turning into professional politicians. When it eventually came, the factionalization of Solidarity was a result of the breakdown of the coalition between the intelligentsia's elitist missionary zeal and the cynical pragmatism of the Walesa group. Those new populist, charismatic leaders tend to be self-righteous and egocentric to the point of assuming that they have an unlimited mandate. That is why Michnik declined to vote for Walesa and predicted that the labor-leader-turned-President will hinder the construction of a constitutional democracy in Poland. It is unclear whether Walesa is trying to emulate Marshal Pilsudski's autocratic style or whether the 200-person Presidential Chancellery is but an updated version of the old Politburo. Yet, following the Presidential elections, accountability, parliamentary procedures and constitutionalism have evidently been underemphasized. Thus it is not altogether inappropriate to expect attempts to recreate some new version of the *ancien regime*, rather than the beginning of Western-type constitutional democracy.

The new situation means not only the end of the coalition between intellectuals and workers but, more generally, the end of the unique role of the intelligentsia in East European politics.[15] In 1980 intellectuals joined Solidarity and turned bread and butter strikes into a massive political movement.[16] Today their political role is quickly declining. The new political arena requires mass media management, image building, flexibility and political showmanship — all of which were often regarded by intellectuals as undignified and anti-intellectual. The

15. George Schoepflin, "The Political Traditions in Eastern Europe," in *Daedalus*, Vol. 119, No. 1 (Winter 1990), pp. 80ff.

16. Adam Michnik, "The Moral and Spiritual Origins of Solidarity," in William M. Brinton and Alan Rinzler, eds., *Without Force or Lies: Voices from the Revolution of Central Europe in 1989-1990* (San Francisco: Mercury House Inc., 1990), pp. 239ff. This account has been questioned by Lawrence Goodwyn, *Breaking the Barrier: The Rise of Solidarity in Poland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

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intelligentsia has always claimed that if the people do not understand what the intellectuals mean, it is the people's fault. As a writer and an editor, Mazowiecki paid a high price for his media shyness, while Geremek, the former Senate leader and accomplished medievalist, lost considerable popularity because he advocated the separation of Church and state.

Michnik believes that the role of opposition intellectuals will decline proportionately to the degree of democratization and privatization of Polish society. Polish intellectuals, especially those who went through the toils of the opposition, do not make good politicians.[17] Confusing idealism with inflexibility, political tolerance with acceptance of communist *nomenklatura* is poor politics. They are correct in believing that empty anti-Semitic slurs and empty promises will be discredited in the long run. Yet, they are wrong in assuming that one can ignore political geography and voting patterns. Mazowiecki's Democratic Union, the party of the former Solidarity's intelligentsia, is hardly proving its political sophistication by endorsing all political liabilities: lay education in a strongly Catholic country, free prices for produce in a country where 35% of the population produces food on inefficient farms, and a generous attitude toward the communist *nomenklatura* after 45 years of oppression.

Some intellectuals like Michnik do not accept the fact that the world they fought for is less than perfect and decline to run for the office. Appalled by the quality of the political campaign, intrusion of the Church and opportunism of his former Solidarity colleagues, Michnik assumed the role of contesting intellectual and bystander. Father Tischner, a Catholic intellectual, disappointed with Mazowiecki's election loss, provided a self-serving explanation: East Europeans are stuck with the intransigent mindset of *homo sovieticus*.[18]

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17. Cf. John Michael, "The Intellectual in Uncivil Society: Michnik, Poland and Community," in *Telos* 88 (Summer 1991), pp. 141-154; and Lawrence Goodwyn, "Rethinking 'Populism': Paradoxes of Historiography and Democracy," in *Telos* 88 (Summer 1991), pp. 37-56.

18. Jozef Tischner, "*Homo Sovietikus*," in *Dziennik Polski* (New York, February 12, 1991), p. 14. "*Homo sovieticus*" as the captive servant of communism, was the "communist client" that the communist system serviced with three main products: work, participation in power and a sense of dignity. This "*homo sovieticus*" preserved the system even after it became totally inefficient. Power and belonging to the elite were more important than privileged access to shrinking consumption. Communism educated its own elites. These emancipated, complacent individuals were placed above the law and democratic legitimation. The communist client traded freedom for the illusion of power. Tischner believes that "*homo sovieticus*" has survived democratic revolutions and carries an intransigent philosophy of power and stewardship of the state into the

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Will the political opportunism of this *homo sovieticus* end up demanding that a charismatic leadership recreate the functional equivalent of the old system? Will Eastern Europe slide into anti-communist dictatorships? Havel, Kundera, Milosz, Haraszti and Tischner have already sounded their warning. Those who understand the impact of communism on East European minds confidently dismiss the idea of the overall crises of democratic governments in the area.[19] Yet nostalgic references to Jozef Pilsudski, Father Tiso and National Democrats do not seem to have a political future at this time. Such leaders and ideas are not being taken seriously even by those who find liberal reforms hard to accept. East Europeans know that Jean Monnet did more for European stability and well-being than any other leader preaching myopic nationalism. If there is a perceivable authoritarian residue, it is merely in the *modus operandi* of those politicians raised within the communist system.

Culture and Capitalism

Cultural and intellectual creativity had once been symbiotic with communist oppression: they existed precisely because they were prohibited. Not only did communism fail to develop socialism, it also failed to destroy independent intellectual expression. On the contrary, it helped it flourish. An anointed dissident culture emerged as the antithesis of its official denial.[20] The 1989 democratic reforms rendered the need for dissident culture obsolete by depriving it of its inherent noble character. Paradoxically, when subjected to the test of marketability, it has suffered the same fate as the official state-sponsored culture. In many cases it disappeared along with war movies and the festivals of old soldiers' songs. Rambo-like films and Western soap operas have won the day. Warsaw, Prague and Budapest now boast porn shops, tabloids and trashy movie houses. Local films draw only small groups of fans and indigenous literary productions do not fare well against translations of drugstore-quality paperbacks. Intellectuals now complain about the demise of subsidized film and theatrical productions and the rise of substandard mass entertainment. Consumers are neither diversified enough nor conscious enough to replace it with a

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new post-communist world. Because he is incorrigibly conformist, "*homo sovieticus*" is unable to change his political environment. His mistrust of the role of the individual does not allow it.

19. Daniel N. Nelson, "Europe's Unstable East," in *Foreign Policy*, No. 82 (Spring 1991), pp. 137ff.

20. Timothy Garton Ash, *The Uses of Adversity: Essays on the Fate of Central Europe* (New York: Vintage Books/Random House, Inc., 1990), pp. 162ff.

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"good" culture. Some intellectuals, seconded by the Catholic Church, believe that these cultural imports, by promoting violence and materialism, are far more threatening to Eastern Europe's traditional religious and moral identity than was communist censorship.

One thing is certain: in a society worried about the risks of capitalist life, intellectual anti-communism is no longer either needed or relevant. Konwicki's and Kundera's novels, Michnik's essays and Havel's plays will never reach the vast number of people they have in the past. They will never again be promoted by either communist sponsorship or communist persecution. In a paradoxical historical twist, Michnik, who reassumed his habitual oppositional role, today publishes a popular and influential daily, *Gazeta Wyborcza* (*Election Gazette*), while Jerzy Urban, one of Solidarity's harshest opponents and the spokesman for the last communist government, publishes anti-Church and anti-government political satire in *Nie* (*No*). The free press has created opportunities for all. The post-Solidarity *nomenklatura* can only envy the communists.

Capitalist liberalism is forming a new powerful elite of entrepreneurs independent of the state and the old microstructures and with incomes that would astonish many Western entrepreneurs. An underdeveloped banking and fiscal system and confused real estate law offer unprecedented opportunities for those who know how to operate at the edge of legality. Overworked and poorly paid bureaucrats who indolently enforce the law reinforce a frontier mentality among the new entrepreneurs. The new bourgeois, reminiscent of the early days of American capitalism, become the cream of the crop, not because they graduated from business schools or inherited their parents' capital, but because they have learned how to operate in the shadow economy, if not the black market. The rapid transition of this new class from illegality to legality coincides with cultural and political emancipation. However, it will take time before they move from their arrogant consumerism and low cultural standards to political awareness and desire for recognition and influence. Ideologically, these new elites are far from the old-type intelligentsia — far from opposition idealists and union leaders. Though they understand the basic connection between money and political influence they hardly support any political group or politician. For them, local politicians, whether former Solidarity combatants, communists or anti-communists, are worth as much as they are able to help in obtaining a building permit or a bank loan, or in securing a prime location for a new shop. Middle-class politics takes time to develop.

Paradoxically, communism, like a time capsule, had conserved and

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retarded the transition from the old social stratification and microstructures. Economic egalitarianism, a common enemy and an ethos of resisting the Soviets formed a unique "private society" perhaps more resistant to change than even the Tarkowskis have indicated.[21] Already during the final days of communism impending shortages and consumer rivalries splintered these microstructures into hostile and competing groups. Only now is a profound transformation taking place. Raw models are not provided by the intelligentsia's benign neglect of former enemies or posture of missionary zeal, but by a Darwinian survival of the fittest. And if those who survive are not supporting the arts or show appalling taste, one can be sure that their children will receive the best education and perhaps will make up for what their parents lacked.

East Germany in the European Community

In order to form a common, open, standardized market Eastern Europe has to transcend its ethnocentric thinking. Membership in the European Community must be preceded by acceptance of West European monetary, technological and political hegemony and a loss of some of the regained economic autonomy. Balanced budgets, real prices and sensible interest rates entail rigid economic and social policies which may result in bankruptcy for over half of today's obsolete enterprises. The political task posed in joining the EC is to satisfy these conditions in the shortest possible time while averting the social instability caused by growing unemployment and economic stratification.

Former East Germany is currently undergoing such a process. The old socialist conglomerates, hitherto heavily subsidized and insulated from competition by state protectionism, are now exposed to market forces. The result has been massive social dislocation. An estimated 10,000 young skilled workers have left industrialized Lower Saxony. Some 30% of East Germany's 9 million workers are likely to lose their jobs during the first year following unification.[22] There has been a wholesale uprooting of local academics, forced to give way to those more familiar with Western scholarship. Yet, no matter how much

21. Cf. Elzbieta Tarkowska and Jacek Tarkowski, "Social Disintegration in Poland: Civil Society of Asocial Familism?" in *Telos* 89 (Fall 1991), pp. 103-109.

22. Frank Unger and Bradley S. Klein, "Globalist and Nationalist Discourses of German Unification," a paper presented at the International Studies Conference, Vancouver, B.C. March 24, 1991, p. 2. Furthermore, German courts have been flooded with close to one million claims to prewar property titles to land and diverse assets in the East. Similarly, precious historical artifacts that had been under wraps for years are now being bought up by Western collectors.

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harder everyday existence has become since unification, and no matter how much they deplore the excesses of commercialization, most East Germans are glad to be "real Germans."

After the purchase of the first used Volkswagen with family savings exchanged for German marks, however, reality hit hard. For many East Germans "sponsored unification" merely replaced the Soviet "Big Brother" with a "Western Uncle." Part of their frustration results from the way the transformation took place — a process in which the population was merely the spectator. Once again decisions were being made for them, though this time in Bonn rather than Moscow. The dismantling of the Berlin Wall fell short of giving East Germans a sense of control over their destiny. While other East Europeans were building grassroots opposition and massive social movements, the destiny of East Germans was being decided for them in Bonn and Moscow. As a result, the East German road to Europe is rather different from that of other East European countries. While the latter have searched for their own "gates to Europe" and are aware of the entry price, East Germans have already passed the gate and are resentful of the price paid to their Western kin. They were not consulted about massive unemployment and the eradication of their welfare state. Helmut Kohl and a handful of experts ignored East Germans while hammering out the unification treaty. Will East Germans be fully integrated on an equal basis within the German market, or are they destined to become only a more eager labor force than the repatriated Turks? These questions reveal the attitudes of those East Germans who do not understand that in the new capitalist Germany they will have to define their own individual roles outside the stewardship of the state. Because of the increasingly competitive social climate, popular tendencies toward racism, xenophobia and chauvinistic nationalism are likely to develop. The costs of the economic transformation of East Germany may be dwarfed by the political cost of the Europeanization of the "new Germans."[23]

Conclusion

In 1989 Eastern Europe embarked on a journey into the future. It will have to find its way by trial and error within new institutions. "The road to freedom is not a road from one system to another," Dahrendorf writes, "but one into open spaces of infinite possible futures, some of which compete with each other. Their competition makes history."[24]

23. Unger, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
24. Ralf Dahrendorf, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

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The next few years will decide whether Central Europe will be able to develop a market economy or plunge into problematic new economic and political systems. Whatever the outcome, the collapse of communism did not end the debate about appropriate boundaries between state, market and society, nor resolve conflicts between populism and liberalism, but only extended these within radically new contexts.

Perhaps the situation in Poland indicates the kind of dilemmas faced by Central Europe generally. Solidarity was the creation of three different political cultures and traditions: Catholic-national, worker-populist and intelligentsia-democratic. Worker-populism, however, cannot be solely identified with the Solidarity rank and file, which in 1981 accepted a coalition of convenience with the intelligentsia. Part of what is considered populism comes from Poland's marginals and the opportunistic, aggressive and irresponsible participants in the revolution of consumers.

The hardships of systemic transformation create unusually fertile and receptive ground for all kinds of populisms, which undoubtedly will remain in one way or another fundamental in the ideological marketplace of Central Europe. Will this mean the demise of liberalism or the return of an authoritarian regime — the revival of communism without communists? Such a conclusion would suggest a grossly mechanical misreading of the social context of the Polish political scene. Liberalism, as a belief in individualism, the sanctity of private property, material progress and dispensability of civic virtues, has formal supporters across the political spectrum, from democratic intellectuals to radical unionists. Yet, liberal solutions become distinctly unpopular when it comes to privatizing "my" plant, justifying "my" unemployment or paying market prices for once subsidized utilities; in short, when they entail the demise of state interventionism. It is perhaps aversion to risk and a legacy of *homo sovieticus* that brings about nostalgia for the overpowering economic stewardship of the state — though never at the cost of individual and civic freedoms. Thus the likelihood of the return of autocracy is next to none, not because of the strength of New Class liberals but because of a civic intuition born of a totalitarian past. The democratic intelligentsia has to be credited to a large extent with the development of this particular sensitivity to threatened and actual infringement of individual freedoms. Yet the same democratic intelligentsia is marginalized as a political force because it harbors deep disdain for populism.

It is more and more obvious to the observers of Central Europe's social situation that the real choice of post-communism is not between

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liberalism and autocracy but among "liberally tainted" forms of populism. Significantly, the real fall of the workers' hero, President Walesa, took place when he spoke about suspending democratic institutions and going above the Seym, no matter whether he sought acceleration of reforms or more power for himself. Walesa's populism waged from the Presidential office failed miserably because the workers value civic liberties more than charisma. The Tyminski phenomenon proved how fast and in unison all former political protagonists could rally against a Le Pen type of populism.

What kind of populism may then emerge in Central Europe? Perhaps each of the countries will develop one specific to its national character, history and ethnic and religious composistion. In Poland, where the Catholic Church has always been involved in defending nationalist and religious freedoms, its hierarchy has filled a post-Solidarity political vacuum. Solidarity's self-identified and self-organized society, seemingly marching towards liberal democracy with the cheers but without the real economic support of the West, lost its momentum. The voters, bewildered by Solidarity's internal fights and apprehensive of the cool liberalism of Balcerowicz and Bielecki voted instead for Church candidates. Thus Polish populism acquired this ethical and moral sponsor because in the world of mistrusted political leaders, it seemed easier to tolerate the Church than anyone else. After all, the Polish Church was always what the people wanted it to be: communal, parochial and nationalist. Yet, the millions of founders of the new temples throughout the country do not want the Church to instruct them on abortion or morality, but to protect them against the destruction of their local familiar society where life was somehow manageable even under communism. It is perhaps impossible to have it both ways at present. But when Poles have attained a level of political maturity they might discover new populist political alternatives surpassing both liberalism and Church dogmatism. Such alternatives will inevitably affect the shape of Central Europe's new political economy.

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Eastern Europe After Communism

Edmund Mokrzycki

The situation in Eastern Europe is much more complicated now than when the communist system fell. Whether the situation today is more promising is open to question. Have East European countries moved closer to a market economy and democracy? There is no clear answer. First, the region has become increasingly differentiated, making it hard to generalize. Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, the first countries to start reforms, constitute a separate entity — the so-called "triangle" — whose problems differ from those of the Slavic countries of the former USSR.[1] Second, the actual course of the "transformation" is much more complicated than was assumed in the reform programs. The reform process is characterized by new, unprecedented phenomena difficult to categorize. Third, the situation is exceptionally dynamic: it literally changes from day to day.

Notwithstanding differences among various East European countries, there is a structural similarity: all postcommunist countries are implementing similar reforms with similar results. To what extent this is caused by parallel circumstances or is due simply to appealing to the same school of thought is unclear. This suggests that much can be inferred about postcommunism by looking at the Polish reform which began early on, is the most radical, and is being pursued with exceptional determination. Thus the Polish experience can serve as a general paradigm for understanding changes in Eastern Europe.

1. In the opinion of Russians, Byelorussians, and Ukrainians, Poland, which is on the brink of bankruptcy, is a "little America." Every day the Polish frontier is crossed by thousands of "tourists" from the former USSR seeking income through either trade or work that is often illegal and poorly paid. These "tourists" often have to wait several days on the border in terrible sanitary conditions before they can enter Poland.

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The Crisis of the Reform

Poland has no tradition of a modern market economy. Between the wars the Polish economy was based on a backward agricultural sector. Modern industry developed primarily in those sectors under state control or state protection. Toward the end of the 1930s every fifth worker was employed in state-owned industries. The state completely controlled some of the most important sectors of the economy (e.g., railroads), and state-owned banks handled more than one-third of the country's bank assets. *The Polish archetype of a market encoded in social memory, e.g., of the peasants, has little in common with a modern market economy.*

The economic reform in Poland faces two serious obstacles: one is systemic and the other can be characterized as general backwardness. On the one hand, the reform seeks to dismantle the planned economy and all of its consequences; on the other, it is another attempt, after the communist one, to modernize the country and to catch up with the rest of Europe (the Poles prefer to speak of "returning to Europe") by moving from a peripheral country to a full-fledged member of the European community of nations.

To what extent does the reform meet the challenge of overcoming these two obstacles? The so-called Balcerowicz Plan was launched January 1, 1990. Leszek Balcerowicz was the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finances of two successive "Solidarity" governments. He implemented his program with an iron hand and became a controversial figure. "Kill Balcerowicz" was only one of the milder epithets that could be heard at the time. With the fall of the Bielecki government in December 1991, Balcerowicz disappeared from the scene, only to remain the object of political attacks — especially by postcommunist, peasants and radical-nationalist groups. His program, however, is still in place, although the new coalition government dominated by the National Christian Party has revised it to soften the impact of the recession. These result in a somewhat looser monetary policy and slightly more state intervention in the economy.

The Balcerowicz Plan is well-known and is being imitated by other East European countries. Thus it is important to understand its underlying assumptions in order to grasp the East European situation in general. Its philosophical premises have never been explicitly stated, but they are clear enough. It is a version of the liberal doctrine which assumes that the free market is the natural state of the economy, and will tend to be established naturally if the economy is left alone. Very popular in Central Europe, it is predicated on the common belief that communism is an aberration. In this context the problem of reform becomes

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one of removing the barriers blocking the natural evolution of the economy toward a free market. Such an approach can lead to very different programs depending on how one understands "barriers." They can be understood so broadly that they encompass all aspects of social life that may have a negative impact on the reform process. However, they can also be defined so narrowly as to cover only the specific parameters of a given economic system. The Balcerowicz Plan is a radical version of the second approach. It consists of two integrated parts: a stabilization program seeking to eliminate hyperinflation, and a liberalization program which, along with the privatization program, is supposed to precipitate systemic changes. The entire plan was the assumption that as stabilization occurred and the restrictions of central planning disappeared the market mechanisms blocked by the communist system would start working spontaneously and the natural process of economic development would begin.

The stabilization program quickly yielded spectacular results, such as bringing inflation under control (although it did not eliminate it) and abolishing the typical attribute of socialist economies — an excess of demand over supply. As the reform process went on, the problems of adaptation became increasingly more acute, affecting state enterprises, "cooperatives," quasi-state enterprises and private companies. In only two years, industrial output has fallen 36%, while unemployment, practically unknown before the reform (except for the so-called "structural unemployment") has exceeded 12%. Most state enterprises are now close to bankruptcy. State agriculture is in ruins. In spite of high tariffs on imported foodstuffs, private agriculture (about 80% of the land under cultivation, employing one fourth of the labor force) cannot compete with Western producers. For almost a year now the budget deficit caused by diminishing revenues from ever more inefficient state enterprises has been increasing. The government has been making desperate efforts to limit the deficit to 5% of the GNP. Most economists think this is not realistic. The difficult budgetary situation is causing serious problems: science, education and health services are on the verge of collapse.

This picture is only slightly improved by the private sector. Toward the end of 1991, 38% of the non-agricultural labor force was employed in private firms, but the share of private firms in industrial production was below 25%, whereas in domestic trade it exceeded 80%. Privatization has not gone beyond the experimental stage. Reprivatization, in turn, is being blocked by legal and social complications.

Difficulties in implementing the Balcerowicz Plan's macroeconomic measures can be explained in purely economic terms. Thus, e.g., the fall

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of the Soviet Union has meant the loss of a market for some branches of Polish industry, e.g., the armaments and ship-building industries. Similarly, extremely profitable and well-developed vegetable and flower producing gardening had always existed in Poland. Two years of reform have resulted in its almost total collapse. The reason is simple: this entire branch of production was technologically and organizationally dependent on cheap, subsidized energy. Yet another example showing the economic limits of rationality: about one-third of the city-dwellers are not paying rent, and their number is growing. Once again the reason is simple. Given traditionally low wages in socialism, the raising of rents to market levels has meant that in many cases they now almost equal salaries. The same mechanism in state industry causes so-called payment logjams: an absurdly complicated network of mutual payment obligations functions solely on an accounting basis. There are even cases of bankruptcies of theoretically very profitable factories.

The problem is not primarily economic. Here is where the philosophy of the Balcerowicz Plan comes in. The assumption that, along with the dismantling of central planning, economic actors would spontaneously begin to operate in accordance with the rules of a market economy has proven wrong. Balcerowicz was surprised by the behavior of state enterprises which, confronted with the new policy, chose to "wait out Balcerowicz" instead of acting in accordance with the rules of the market. After two years of holding to a firm course, even the most stubborn reformers began to lose hope that state industry could be softened up. This industry is moving toward total collapse rather than toward adaptation to market conditions as anticipated by the reform plan. There is no serious program for dealing with this situation. The East German solution is impossible in the other postcommunist countries because it requires enormous financial outlays.

This problem is not confined to state industry. It is becoming increasingly clear that something in the reform process is not working. The spontaneous vital forces of a market economy have not been released on a scale necessary to pull the country out of the postcommunist collapse. If free market forces are really inherent in every society, in some societies they are much more submerged than in others. How far below the surface are they in Polish society?

The Social Context of the Reform

Notwithstanding all this, the question of how social traits are conducive to the construction of a modern market economy in Poland can be answered in a relatively optimistic way.

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1) *The system of values*. Comparative sciological studies indicate that the Polish value system is within European standards, and that Poland as a country constitutes the Northern-Catholic periphery of Europe. Moreover, Polish Catholicism is more ceremonial and social than doctrinal. To a great extent religion is concerned with organizing social life mainly on a local level having to do with group identification rather than Church dogmas and lifestyles. Thus, e.g., less than 15% of the Catholics favor a total ban of abortion. Contrary to the stereotypes, xenophobia correlates weakly with religion and much more strongly with education and age.

Public opinion polls unequivocally confirm the rejection of socialism as a social system, both on the general as well as the individual ideological level. There is no chance that, as difficulties connected with the reform mount, there may be a relapse into socialism. There are some symptoms of this, but they have an entirely different meaning. For example, a growing number of people are defending state industries and the welfare system. Yet this has to be interpreted in the context of a feeling of danger, a lack of perceived alternatives (saving state industry or facing unemployment and hunger), and the natural desire to keep what one has. In Poland, and in all of Central Europe, there is a sharp contrast between group interests and ideological preferences rooted in values and culture.

2) *The infrastructure*. There is a strong attachment to private property. Poland was the only communist country in which, in spite of brutal measures, the authorities were unable to force through the collectivization of agriculture. There is also a strong tradition of small manufacturers forming cooperatives of various kinds. But Poland never developed a modern market infrastructure, and those parts of the infrastructure which were developing well before WWII, such as banking, were completely eradicated after the war. The entire infrastructure of a market economy has to be built up from scratch. Most Poles do not understand the rules of a modern market economy. Both the Polish bureaucracy and nascent market institutions are fettered by an inadequate and incoherent legal system.

For a postcommunist country Poland is politically stable. But the political institutions that in the West allow the market to function smoothly are just beginning to develop. In a country whose citizens are politically active and which has relatively strong elites, the political scene has become dominated by small groups of activists. While in accordance with the rules of democratic representation this so-called

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"political class" *de jure* represents all of society, *de facto* it is alienated from society. The key to a stable and efficient democratic system is institutionalized accountability. In Poland this exists only in embryonic form. The democratic mechanisms of political control are inefficient.

This state of affairs entails the potential danger of a widening gulf between society (along with the intellectual elites) and its political, democratically elected representatives. Low voter participation in the October 1991 elections was the first sign of a rejection of the "political class" by a considerable part of society. Since then, there has been a constant decline in the acceptance of this "class." Today this acceptance is so low that it threatens the formation of alternative, extra-constitutional forms of political representation.

A good barometer of this situation is the fact that for many months now the institutions that enjoy the greatest social support are the army, the police and the Catholic Church — in that order. The Church has fallen from first to third place. The Seym and the Senate are far down the list. Ordinarily this would be a clear indication of authoritarianism, but in the present Polish context it is more an expression of a deep mistrust of official political institutions.

3) *Homo Sovieticus*. Many observers believe that a highly negative role is played by the attitudes and habits referred to by the term "*homo sovieticus*," i.e., passivity, waiting for state handouts, loose labor discipline, little respect for the law, etc. All of Eastern Europe is plagued by behavioral patterns confirming the existence of such a syndrome. However, two years of Polish reform indicate that this is a complex of opportunistic behaviors linked to specific conditions. As these conditions disappear, this syndrome is also likely to wane. In the long run it is not a serious obstacle to the reforms. A more serious barrier is the structure of group interests.

4) *Group Interests*. The chief mechanism of the planned economy was the distribution of goods and resources. This took place through the allocation of money and raw materials, and its aim was to carry out a specific "economic policy" (e.g., in heavy industry, agriculture, etc.). At the same time this driving mechanism became a means of social stratification: it determined the place of individuals in society. The individual's social position and welfare did not depend on the market's "invisible hand," but on the planners' conscious decisions.

Over a few generations this mechanism has created an unprecedented social situation: the dependence of individuals on the central distribution system. The real interests of individuals and groups were permanently

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harnessed to the redistributive state. The liberal reform implies the dismantling of the distributive state and, irrespective of what is being promised in the future, today the *privileges of the socialist system* are being taken away from them: what they have acquired through the communist government's 45-year long blockage of market mechanisms.

The point is that *all* social groups benefitted from the socialist system. Workers as a class benefitted from forced industrialization, farmers from the economy of shortages[2] which guaranteed unlimited demand for food irrespective of quality, intellectuals from the patronage of the state and the "soft financing" of science, culture, etc., and the hounded private sector from the lack of competition and the second economy.[3] This linking of group interests to the distributive function of the socialist state has had concrete consequences. It has become consolidated in what is produced, how it is produced, and what is done with this production. Thanks to socialism, the Polish family farm has survived in its 19th century *peasant* form. The development of private agriculture was blocked for ideological reasons, while the central redistribution of goods guaranteed survival of even the most inefficient farms. Socialism "froze" Polish agriculture at its 19th century level. In so doing it also froze the peasant class in its 19th century form. This is why the structure of group interests connected with central planning, rather than ideology, the post-communist mentality, etc., is the main obstacle to reform. In different degrees the reform strikes at the real interests of *all* groups. Some are confronted with the need to adapt to change, while others, like the peasants, face the prospect of vanishing altogether as a group. The rapid disappearance of large social classes, however, never takes place without revolutionary upheavals.

Conclusions

This analysis of the Polish situation cannot all be generalized to cover all post-communist countries. None of these other countries has a peasant class. In most, religion plays a smaller role than in Poland. Moreover, in Poland the workers concentrated in heavy industry, a decliming sector, are exceptionally well organized, with personal ties to the present power apparatus. Poland is the only country in which private property has survived on a large scale in agriculture. Poland also has no ethnic

2. See Janos Kornai, *Economics of Shortages* (Amsterdam: North Hollandi, 1980).

3. For a broader discussion of this question, see Edmund Mokrzycki, "The Legacy of Real Socialism, Group Interests, and the Search for a New Utopia," in Walter C. Connor and P. Ploszajski, eds., *Escape from Socialism: The Polish Route* (Warsaw: IFiS Publishers, 1992).

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conflicts. Finally, there is a considerable difference between the "triangle" (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary) and the rest of Eastern Europe in regard to political and economic stability, the development of democratic institutions, the danger of internal conflict, economic and political ties with the West, etc.

Yet certain general conclusions seem obvious. In the first place, after two years of the Polish "shock therapy" it is clear that the diagnosis of the East European situation after the fall of communism was too optimistic and the program of reforms too narrow. The assumption that the key to the development of Eastern Europe was the release of economic initiative blocked by the communist system of central planning turned out to be false. The problem is much broader and has social and cultural roots.

1) On the social and cultural level, there are favorable conditions for the rapid development of a market economy in all of Eastern Europe. This is especially true in Central Europe, where the last two decades of socialism have generated strong, often uncritical pro-Western sentiments. Similarly, ethnic phobias and nationalistic attitudes are vanishing among younger generations. Among the younger generation in Poland there is a steady turn away from traditional Polish nationalism, a high level of tolerance, and a preference for Western life-styles.

2) As far as the infrastructure necessary for a market economy is concerned, conditions are better in the "triangle" than, e.g., in the Slavic republics of the former USSR.

3) Group interests constitute the greatest obstacle to reform. As a consequence of 45 (70 in the former USSR) years of central planning, these group interests are an inextricable part of the social structure. They are the source of the most serious social conflicts of the last two years. The most serious problems still lie ahead and will be exacerbated with the disintegration of socialist heavy industry. Economic rationality will be a weak counterweight to the threatened interests of such powerful groups.

This is why the economic reforms initiated as a purely economic, almost technical undertaking are rapidly entering a revolutionary phase, i.e., a phase of rapid, conflict-generating, sweeping social changes.

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Reviews:

The Federalization of Money

Ellen Kennedy, *The Bundesbank: Germany's Central Bank in the International Monetary System*, Published in North America for The Royal Institute of International Affairs (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1991), pp. 134.

The so-called Hallstein doctrine[1] that "monetary policy is the keystone" of European integration is still widely accepted within the European Community (EC). But the cornerstone of European integration remains a political matter. With the prospect of increased competition after 1992, when banks will be able to spread throughout the EC, private bankers must become more like businessmen — subject more than ever to the demands of the marketplace.[2] Must public bankers then become more like politicians? In France and Japan, for example, adjustments to free-market savings rates in the past few years have been unsettling. What will happen when these are introduced in Germany next year, along with money-market funds (which invest in short-term securities and pay high interest rates)? Clearly the marketization of European banking will put greater pressure on central banks in general and the Bundesbank in particular. In Ellen Kennedy's primer on Germany's central bank she calls it a "political institution," but then emphasizes its specific constitutional situation as divorced from the political and economic spheres. The question of whether the Bundesbank is in fact a "political institution" is essential not only to its position in the international monetary system but also to European integration.

When the Werner Report[3] first proposed European Monetary Union (EMU) in 1969, it was in some ways ahead of its time politically because it anticipated

1. Walter Hallstein was the State Secretary of the West German Foreign Ministry and head of the German delegation to the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) which, along with Jean Monnet, he saw as the beginning of a European community. See Walter Hallstein, *Die Europäische Gemeinschaft* (Düsseldorf: Econ Verlag, 1974).

2. Cf. the report on "World Banking" in *The Economist* (May 2, 1992), especially pp. 3ff. and 29ff.

3. The EC Committee chaired by Pierre Werner, then Minister-President of Luxembourg, incorporated in its report the proposal for a free trade zone in which goods and services, people and capital would move without respect to national boundaries. It proposed to supplement the national decision-making institutions of the member states.

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the impending disintegration (in the early 1970s) of the Bretton Woods system established in 1944, based on the convertibility of the dollar to gold and obligatory intervention to support official exchange rates. The first attempt in 1971-72 to unite the economies of the EC countries over an extended period of time failed even before the first oil crisis. Italy, England and Ireland had to withdraw from the European exchange rate (the "snake in the tunnel") initiated in April 1972 because their costs and prices were diverging too much from other participating countries. Sweden and Norway soon followed. It became obvious that a stabilization of exchange rates in the system, in preparation for the establishment of a EMU, was possible only on the basis of stability-oriented policies and consistent economic developments. But the project ultimately failed because of differences with respect to the objectives and the unwillingness to accept a common stability goal.

In the view of the Bundesbank, German monetary stability was undermined repeatedly by influences originating abroad owing to its compliance with Bretton Woods — fixed exchange rates and "imported inflation." Once the system collapsed, exchange-rate fluctuations tended to distort the domestic economy of Germany in particular, since by the 1970s it had become the leading export nation. The introduction of the European Monetary System (EMS) in 1979, which initially was opposed by the Bundesbank as inconsistent with its constitutional mandate to maintain domestic monetary stability, ultimately created a kind of European Bretton Woods with the German currency as anchor because the mark had become one of the two international reserve and intervention currencies (along with the American dollar). The formal obligation to buy and sell marks made Germany's central bank the focus of debates about European integration and the role of money. This position has increased with further efforts toward economic and monetary union, which will create a single European market in 1993. The legal prerequisites for this were created in the Single European Act of 1987. In June 1988 the European Council commissioned a committee consisting of the EC central bank governors and other appropriate functionaries to study and propose concrete stages toward the implementation of economic and monetary union. As Kennedy indicates, the so-called Delors Report "marked out the terrain of the political struggle now just beginning" (103). It was decided that the first stage would start on July 1, 1990, when an intergovernmental conference would be convened to determine the subsequent stages of EMU.

Kennedy's book was completed in the Fall of 1990 and published just prior to the further development of the process of EMU that took place in Maastricht, Netherlands, on December 9-10, 1991. Nevertheless, her account provides a basis for understanding present and future developments with respect to the Bundesbank and European integration. The former vice-president of the Bundesbank, Helmut Schlesinger, has replaced Karl Otto Pöhl as president, and recent events in Germany and in Europe have shaken confidence in European integration, or at least in its tempo. However, in the wake of Maastricht

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it is sufficient to note Kennedy's observation that: "A future central bank for a common European currency will look much like the Bundesbank, following its model of independence from government and dedication to monetary policy. If present trends continue, Europe's central bank will also be federal, distributing its policy-making powers through the EC, with representatives from all of its members on the Central Council" (108).

The Maastricht "Treaty on European Union" amends the existing treaties — the Treaty on the European Economic Community (EEC), the Treaty on the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the Treaty on the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). The EC is granted a number of new and extended responsibilities, taking due account of the principle of subsidiarity. Both the European Parliament and the democratic legitimacy of the EC are strengthened, but a common foreign and security policy and cooperation in such areas as law and domestic affairs are only *envisaged* as further spheres of jurisdiction. Most important are the provisions for the European Economic and Currency Union (EECU). In line with the fundamental principles of the German economic order and the Bundesbank, to achieve the stated objective the member states are to coordinate a single monetary and exchange rate policy geared primarily to insure price stability. Furthermore they are required to exercise budgetary discipline in public finance and to strive for external equilibrium. Budgetary policy will not be the responsibility of the EC but will be subjected to a process of progressively stricter coordination. Of special significance is the ban on the monetary financing of budgetary deficits and restrictions of a similar nature.

During stage two, responsibility for monetary policy will remain on the national level. The European Monetary Institute (EMI), which is to be established in 1994, will still have no management functions. Its task will be similar to the present committee of EC central bank governors, which is to strengthen coordination and prepare the instruments and procedures for stage three. The members of the EMI are the national central banks of the participating states. When the European central bank is finally established,[4] the EMI will be liquidated. The earliest that this is foreseen is 1997, the condition being that a majority of the member states fulfill certain criteria: a lower rate of inflation, a state deficit of not more than 60% of the GNP, etc. Those which cannot meet these standards by 1996 will not be granted full membership. However, by 1999 EMU will become general, albeit with a minority of stable states. In the final stage the exchange rate of currencies will be fixed and there will be a common currency: the ECU.[5] All other goals of the European central bank will

4. Cf. Thomas Hanke, "Eine Mark für zwölf: Wichtige Ergebnis von Maastricht. Europa übernimmt die monetäre Ordnung der Deutschen," in *Die Zeit*, No. 51 (December 20, 1991), pp. 7-8.

5. Although the ECU is not yet a legal currency, since 1979 it has gradually gained acceptance in international financial markets. There is a growing ECU bond market already used by governments, international organizations and companies around the

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be subordinated to its role as defender of the new currency and its prime objective of maintaining price stability. The Bundesbank was clearly the model in Maastricht. But there is still the question of "political union," which may prove more significant than the fact that the draft treaties signed at Maastricht must be ratified by all twelve national parliaments before they come into effect.

The question remains whether economic and monetary union either can and/or should precede "political union." This has been demonstrated in an unprecedented public dispute in the formerly secret deliberations of the Central Council of the Bundesbank — between Schlesinger and the majority of its members, sixteen in all.[6] It concerns the model of the Bundesbank itself, since the Bundesbank Law of 1957 assigned responsibility for general economic policy to the federal government and left the jurisdiction of monetary policy to the Bundesbank — it divided political (and economic) sovereignty and monetary sovereignty. Initially opposed to Bonn's European politics, which has pursued the line of monetary union before political union, the dispute in the Central Council became public when the majority responded to Schlesinger's uncritical endorsement of the government's position and the EECU.[7] Not only did Schlesinger say that the German parliament should have no problem with ratifying the Maastricht Treaty, he went so far as to assert that no substantial objection had been voiced against monetary union. He affirmed that in many respects the statute of the projected European central bank would be stronger than the Bundesbank Law, which gave weight to both aspects of a modern central bank in a democracy: regulating the creation of money and responsibility for monetary policy. But the main issue in the dispute is not the Bundesbank model of the European central bank or even whether the coordination of currencies will lead through administrative measures to the introduction of wider currency bands or to a system of stabilization à la Bretton Woods, which Schlesinger acknowledged as a possibility. It is rather the fact that the majority of the Central Council believe that monetary union cannot succeed without political union or, more specifically, that the stability of the currency cannot be achieved without firm political structures.

The statement issued by the Central Council is ambiguous. It acknowledges that the Bundesbank participated intensively as an advisor in the preparatory

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world. There is a commercial paper market, ECU bank loans, checks and even credit cards, although no currency. Since it is nevertheless a "basket" of currency, it is becoming an attractive way to reduce currency risk because it is less likely to shift in value. Cf. Jonathan Fuerbringer, "A European Currency Inches Toward Acceptance," in the *New York Times* (May 17, 1992).

6. Cf. Thomas Hanke and Udo Perino, "Krach auf dem Olymp: Die Gegner von Bundesbankchef Helmut Schlesinger proben den Aufstand," in *Die Zeit*, No. 7 (February 14, 1992), pp. 9-10.

7. Cf. Thomas Hanke and Roger de Weck, "Eine Frage des Vertrauens: ZEIT-Gespräch mit Bundesbankpräsident Helmut Schlesinger über die Europäische Währungsunion," in *Die Zeit*, No. 52 (December 27, 1991), pp. 7-8.

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work on formulating the treaty, although the decisions at Maastricht were made by the EC heads of state and government: "The recommendations of the Bundesbank concerning all major technical issues and problems were duly taken into account by the Federal Government in reaching its political decisions."[8] It further acknowledges that "[t]he planned institutional design of the final stage is largely in line with the Bundesbank recommendations." However, such statements are prefaced by the following: "The question of whether an EMU is to be established is a political decision. This decision is within the competence and responsibility of the government and parliament. As part of its advisory function, the Bundesbank pointed out at an early stage that the implications of monetary policy pursued in a monetary union at Community level — in particular the implications for the value of money — will be crucially influenced by the economic and fiscal policies of and by the behavior of management and labor in all the participating countries. It also drew attention to the fact that a monetary union '. . . requires a more far-reaching association, in the form of a comprehensive political union, if it is to prove durable' (statement by the Central Council of September 1990). The Maastricht decisions do not yet reveal an agreement on the future structure of the envisaged political union and on the required parallelism with monetary union. Future developments in the field of political union will be of key importance for the permanent success of the monetary union." In the final point of the statement, the Central Council made clear that monetary policy alone would be overburdened by the task of achieving the goals even in the transitional stages: "In addition, the institutional patterns and legal procedures in all member states must soon be adjusted so as to ensure central banks' independence in their monetary policy decisions and budgetary discipline in accordance with the requirements of EMU."

Regardless of whether Bonn's European politics can be considered improper political pressures, there is no doubt that the Maastricht Treaty poses a problem for the Bundesbank. As Kennedy observes, majority opinion has argued against efforts to use monetary policy to further Europe's political goals, assuming that exchange rates must reflect a country's underlying economic status. But more to the point: "[T]he position of this majority conformed to established Bundesbank theory: real factors and forces drive the economy, and these are beyond the reach of monetary policy. Money and money supply *represent* a reality; they affect production as a real economy, but they cannot substitute for other factors" (102). Not only the great inflation of the 1920s and the Third Reich informs this position, but also a notion of German identitiy with deeper roots. As Harold James has argued, economic consolidation served where other factors were lacking.[9] German unity in the 19th century

8. This and the following quotations are from "The Maastricht decisions on the European economic and monetary union," in *Monthly Report of the Deutsches Bundesbank* (February 1992), pp. 51-52.

9. Harold James, *A German Identity 1770-1990* (New York: Routledge, 1989). Cf. the review by Jack Zipes, "Reunifying Germany," in *Telos* 83 (Spring 1990), pp. 177-88.

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found an identity in economic power and wealth, which made the Germans peculiarly wary of economic crises they saw as threats to their national existence. This not only explains why West Germans regained a sense of identity only through a spectacular economic development that has made them the richest country in Western Europe, but also why the EECU is unsettling to the Bundesbank, even if modeled on itself: monetary policy is not synonymous with economic policy and economic policy is a political matter beyond its control. However, there is still the question whether economic and monetary policy can become the foundation of European unity, despite the historical identity of the German "nation."

Delors greeted Kennedy's book enthusiastically, no doubt because she focused on the "political struggle" of the Bundesbank — a struggle at once domestic and international, constitutional and political. It goes to the essence of the institution itself, which is why Kennedy's book is instructive. She locates the origin of the Bundesbank in German history, defines its constitutional character in terms of the West German political landscape, traces its reaction to recent national and international developments, including the reunification of Germany, and sets the stage for the present debate on the role of the Bundesbank in European integration. Of particular significance is her emphasis on the Bundesbank as a *federal* institution, since at Maastricht it was decided (against British objections) that the EC ultimately will be a true federation. Because federation is first and foremost a constitutional matter, it would seem that the revolt of the majority of the Central Council is justified. While Christian Kastrop, spokesman of the Federal Finance Ministry, has implied that opposition to Maastricht in its present form is opposition to European integration as such, and Peter Gauweiler, the Bavarian Environmental Minister, has labeled ECU "Esperanto money," there is a middle ground.

Despite the Maastricht Treaty, the question arises from Kennedy's book as to whether the Bundesbank is the right model for a European central bank, which is a question of whether the federalization of money in general and monetary policy in particular can create its own political climate, whether economic policies can forge political bonds that ultimately will result in a constitution for a united Europe. As a matter of fact, Germany's central bank preceded the Federal Constitution by more than a year, even though the creation of the bank was foreseen in the constitutional promulgation of 1949. The goal of the Allies with respect to monetary matters was the same as for political matters — to create *decentralized* federal structures. Although Germany had a long tradition of federalism prior to the Weimar Republic, the centralism of the Third Reich was the main reference point. Consequently, central banks were established in all the *Länder* of occupied Germany that became the Federal Republic in 1949. In addition to these *Landeszentralbanken*, the British insisted on a central bank to coordinate them. The structure and powers of the present Bundesbank closely resemble those of this *Bund deutscher Länder*, with the difference that the Allied Banking Commission retained veto power over the policies of the latter.

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Following the pattern of federalism established in the Federal Constitution, the Central Council of the Bundesbank adheres to the principle of "one *Land*, one vote," regardless of size or wealth. The central banks in the *Länder* serve as the federal anchors of Bundesbank policy, which is first and foremost to protect the currency. Most political debates concerning the Bundesbank have arisen over the appropriateness of the means to that end, which is constitutionally stipulated. These have largely been concerned with the external versus the internal value of the currency and the relation between monetary policy and the wider goals of the economy. Kennedy speculates that the friction inherent in the federal structure between government political sovereignty and Bundesbank monetary sovereignty might be transferred to the European level. There is yet another dimension of this situation which has reference to the relation between liberalism and democracy: "In many respects the Bundesbank incorporates the ideals of an earlier age of political development. Largely immune to the pressures of pluralist politics, it sees itself as the representative of a good higher than particular interests, and that vision animates its policy attitudes. But are such principles justified in a democracy? The bank is no longer a national institution. How will a normative power of law fare in the wider sphere of interests in which Germany's economic power now involves the Bundesbank" (4)?

This seems to contradict Kennedy's claim that the future European central bank will look pretty much like the Bundesbank. But it more serves to emphasize the contradictions inherent in the model itself. As she indicates, some believe that the federal structure of the Bundesbank is now outdated, that it has become too big and too expensive. If a federal structure is really important to the Bundesbank, so the argument goes, then it should at least be rationalized along the lines of the US Federal Reserve with its twelve regional offices. Kennedy is certainly right in her observation that in "the context of European integration the tension between Germany's federal structure and the demands of a European economy is more likely to increase than diminish, as layers of European monetary bureaucracy are superimposed on the existing organization" (20). But the problem is that the US Federal Reserve exists in a context in which increasingly the federal components of the US Constitution have been subordinated to other objectives. This defederalization of the American polity has developed as a consistent realization of democracy in conjunction with the centralization promoted by a liberalism which has tied its fortunes to the state. The reason why the tension between West Germany's federal structure and the demands of the European economy is likely to increase is precisely because the European monetary bureaucracy is threatening to become federal in name only.

The fact of the matter is that the Bundesbank incorporates less "the ideal of an earlier age of political development" than of an original concept of federalism consistent with the *ideal* as opposed to the *real* situation of the US following WWII. The higher good of the common purpose of federalism will

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always be in conflict with the particular interests of liberalism, especially one which has sought to reconcile individualism with centralism and thus left to communities — the EC or any other — only the option to protest.

"How can an institution legally bound to the 'protection of the currency' as its central task also manage the European Monetary System when other interests conflict with statutory duties" (28)? There is no doubt that the national priorities of the Bundesbank are not completely reconcilable with the international pressures of European integration and monetary union, and these should not be underestimated. But the federal structure of the Bundesbank and its policy of sound money hold out the hope that ultimately the federalist project of the EC acknowledged at Maastricht may not be subverted either by particular interests or bureaucratic centralism. Of course there are problems with the legal position of the Bundesbank in Germany as regards its expansion in a European context. If the Bundesbank Law of 1957 assigned responsibility for general economic policy to the federal government, leaving monetary policy to the Bundesbank, the Stability and Growth Law of 1967, enacted at the peak of Keynesian influence, provided that the state should intervene to insure that inflation, trade and employment are kept in balance. The rationale here is quite consistent with James' thesis, namely that this law "accepts economic success as the criterion of governmental legitimacy and envisages the state taking on the role of guarantor for the national economy, even though state action is justified in pragmatic limited terms" (32).

The economic ground rules of the Bundesbank are part of a broader constitutional framework that limits individual property rights and the pursuit of profit in view of wider social rights and responsibilities. This is consistent with the ideological basis of Germany's political culture, which is a liberal democracy with a social market economy and a *sozialer Rechtsstaat*, i.e., a liberal legal order that incorporates social values. While a liberal legal order is concerned primarily with constitutional *law* (in the sense of legal specifications), a federal constitutional order has reference to the basic will and intent of the constituent parties (i.e., the common ground or homogeneous minimum that unites heterogeneous entities). Since the model of the Bundesbank involves both constitutional law understood in the positivist sense and the constitution understood in this essential sense, there are inherent contradictions in the position of the Bundesbank in the system of German federalism that cannot be adopted by the EC without considerable changes and even continuing contradictions which must be handled rather than overcome. Of course, there are aspects of a liberal legal order necessarily presupposed in any restructuring of Europe along democratic lines. But these alone are insufficient because they cannot distinguish between private and public law in a constitutional framework that only federalism can provide. Before addressing the question of a European central bank in a united Europe, however, it is necessary to consider how the Bundesbank is faring in the European project.

Whereas a decade ago German interest rates would have been watched by

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the rest of Europe but hardly considered decisive, now the Lombard rate[10] even has weight in Britain, which will assume the rotating presidency of the EC later this year.[11] Clearly the Bundesbank is a national institution increasingly subject to international demands forcing it to justify its decisions in terms, if not contrary to, at least not entirely consistent with its paradigm of minimizing inflation and maintaining the stability of the mark. Moreover, since domestically these monetary goals take precedence over conflicting economic goals (such as growth and full employment), fundamental conflicts over the direction of the economy are increasingly likely in the broader pattern of Bundesbank-government relations. As Kennedy points out, economic relations have become "internationalized" through autonomous capital movements and market expectations beyond the control of states to a greater degree than ever before. Finally, the Bundesbank's major concern with "imported inflation" is now complemented with internal inflation generated by the cost of German reunification. Kennedy poses not only the question of whether the autonomy of the Bundesbank is threatened by foreign policy decisions domestically and internationally, but also whether pressure on interest rates challenge what she calls the Bundesbank's *Realpolitik*, i.e. its role as monetary anchor of the EMS.

Thus far the Bundesbank appears to be holding its own. More to the point, however, is that a European central bank will be not merely the Bundesbank writ large, despite the Maastricht model. It will be a new institution in a new constitutional framework with its own autonomy and its own *Realpolitik* — probably in a world with three major currency zones. Whether exchange rates in such a constellation are fixed or float, there will be only one European currency. There is no doubt that the "Bundesbank is in a better position than governments to pursue its policies by reference to German constitutionalism because its claim to expert objectivity can be translated more easily into the concern for the common good than similar claims by politicians" (54). But is there a necessary relation between the federal structure of the Bundesbank and the division of sovereignty between economic and monetary policy? This division is based on a liberal fiction with a legal rationale. It harks back to the tension between state and society, politics and economics, which was perhaps more evident in Germany than elsewhere. Before the development of democracy destroyed the distinction between state and society, which politicized all neutral social domains — religion, culture, education, etc. — liberalism promoted the idea that the economy above all was a domain of reciprocity, equality, and civil peace, whereas the political domain was characterized by conquest, thievery, and crimes of all sorts. This was the obverse of Hegel's

10. The "Lombard rate" refers to the interest at which banks may borrow money from the Bundesbank.

11. Cf. Floyd Norris, "Less Flexibility in Europe's Rates," in *The New York Times* (May 7, 1992).

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conception of the German state as a realm of morality and objective reason high above the acquisitive realm of society. But as Schmitt pointed out, neither the characterization of economics or politics, society or the state in these alternative views is very precise, since exchange and deception are often not far apart.[12] No more proof was needed than the political practice of liberalism once society organized itself as the state. Once economics became political, the neutrality claim became null and void. But what about money?

If the economy could not escape the logic of the political, then clearly neither could money, which means that the separation of economic policy and monetary policy in the German constitutional context is artificial. The presumption that money is neutral is a fiction that functions "as if" it were a fact, similar to legal personality in private law. This is to prevent the *politicization* of money by special interests — whatever these may be in any given constitutional configuration. Here the predicament of the German government and the Bundesbank is clear: in the dispute with Chancellor Helmut Schmidt over interest rates in 1981; in the Franco-German Treaty of December 1987, which placed the state-controlled Banque de France on an equal footing with the independent Bundesbank and ignored other provisions of the Bundesbank Law; and most recently in the Maastricht Treaty, which foresees currency union before political union. But this predicament is less problematic than the alternative, which is to abandon money to the logic of the political.

Today integration spells federalization; and even more, federalization of increasingly autonomous entities within and beyond the former borders of European nation-states, although these states are still the major actors in the process. But more to the point is that economic and monetary union is unlikely to lead to the federal organization of a "United States of Europe." Even the German Customs Union, the *Zollverein* established in 1834, which in a few years brought about the economic unity of most of Germany, encouraged industry and led to the construction of the first sections of the German railway system, obtained within the framework of the German Confederation founded in 1815, however unsuccessful and unworkable it was. The main problem, of course, was Prussian hegemony and the fact that Austria remained outside the *Zollverein*. The war of 1866 put an end to both the Confederation and the Customs Union, and the successes of German industrialization obtained within the North German Federation Bismarck founded in 1867 and the "Second Reich" of 1871 which incorporated the southern states in a united federation. By then an international economy on a world scale was in the making. The dismantling of a system which combined protection and preference had to be done in installments. Some actions were unilateral; others were reciprocal concessions embodied in treaties of trade. The general trend of national policies lowered or removed those obstacles which blocked international commerce.

12. Cf. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. by George Schwab (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1976), pp. 76ff.

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The benefits of interstate free trade, guaranteed by the US Federal Constitution, were take into account in the *Zollvereign*, even as Bismarck was influenced by the American federal model.

A constitutional framework is necessary both to guarantee the *federalization* of money and to guard against its politicization. The relative autonomy of a future European central bank cannot be left to the exigencies of treaties between states in line with the maxim *pacta sunt servanda* — valid for so long as they are politically expedient. Only a constitution can bind autonomous political entities in a permanent federation. Only a federation can maintain the necessary legal fiction of money as a neutral domain. Although less autonomous than the Bundesbank, the US Federal Reserve continues to fulfill the function of its mandate despite the eroding effects of political and economic decisions with respect to inflation and public debt.

At present the Bundesbank "tends to balance domestic responsibilities against international pressures, consistently emphasizing the priority of the former" (77), in line with its constitutional mandate. Similarly, a European central bank will tend to balance European responsibilities against international pressures as mandated by a European federal constitution. Without a constitutional framework, the maintenance of this balance would be challenged continually by special interests of all kinds, but most particularly by those of still-existing nation-states. When Kennedy suggests that the success of the Bundesbank has been dependent on a political culture "unlikely to be repeated elsewhere," she clearly has in mind a liberal democracy with a social market economy and a *sozialer Rechtsstaat*. But what is most specific about German political culture is less its legal configurations than its constitutional foundations. The Bundesbank is a *federal* institution grounded in a *federal* constitution. If one approaches European unification from the standpoint of economic and monetary policy, then the particularities of the political culture necessarily appear more daunting to the project itself. Precisely because economy and money are political, there is need to ground European union in a firm constitutional framework — a *federal* framework.

G. L. Ulmen

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New Racism vs. Old Anti-Racism in France

Pierre-André Taguieff ed., *Face au racisme* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 1991) 2 Vols., 582 pp.

Throughout Western Europe public opinion polls indicate mounting frustration with the "immigrant problem" — an influx of impoverished, culturally-distinct, non-European migrants, driven by the relative economic-demographic disparities between the Third World and the West. Words such as "invasion," "ghettos" and "insecurity" express a generalized fear of expanding urban concentrations of poor migrants whose eventual absorption (in the popular view) is highly problematic and whose cultural assimilation, for a constituency far beyond the Extreme Right, has become doubtful.[1] Beyond the additional "threat" of significant migration from Eastern Europe should the transformational efforts in the former communist bloc fail, economic stagnation and rising unemployment in Western Europe will have created conditions wherein "normal"

1. Significant migration of non-European workers into Western Europe began in the 1950s. Governments encouraged it to overcome labor shortages, anticipating the eventual return of these "guest" laborers through periodic rotations, rather than actual settlement in Europe. Initially, non-European workers were single males, frequently housed in dormitories, though eventually families joined them as immigration controls were relaxed. When economic stagnation set in during the 1970s, restrictive quotas were set, never again to be increased. Thus the primary foreign source of legal immigration was closed. Subsequent increases in foreign populations were due mainly to children born in Europe. In France, for example, it has been estimated that by 1982 25% of the foreign population was born there; as were 40% of foreign children under the age of eighteen and 80% of foreign children less than ten (Vol. II, p. 301). More than ten years after the limitation of immigration, the nature of immigration had changed: "the new foreigners, in the main, are children born on French soil." Cf. Jacques Voisard and Christiane Ducastelle, *La question immigrée* (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1988), p. 19. Another wave of immigrants came after 1987; those claiming political refugee status (from 200,000 in 1987 to 600,000 in 1990; in 1972 the number was 20,000 and in 1982 it was less than 100,000). International accords stipulate that those seeking political refugee status cannot be denied entry until their claims are investigated. Most of the "illegals" are people whose claims were denied but who remained clandestinely. Roughly 60% of asylum-seekers are attracted to Germany, presently at the rate of 31,000 per month. In France, asylum applications increased 33% from 1984 to 1985, and 85% from 1987 to 1988. New immigration laws were implemented at that time. "As the number of applications has risen, application acceptances have gone down. From 1977 to 1981, an average of 14,242 applications were accepted. Today refugee grants average only 4,000 a year." (Lynne Simpson Snowden, "The Impact of Asylum Policy in the Netherlands, France and Germany," in *Migration World*, Vol. XIX, No. 3, 1991). Though there are no reliable figures, it has been estimated that the "clandestine" population in France is 300,000 to 400,000.

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ethnocentrism has begun to transform itself into xenophobia, aggressive nationalism and even racism. Unlike the old variant, this new racism does not generally express itself "biologically" (contempt for "inferior" non-whites, based on a presumed hierarchy of races) but "culturally" (fear of an unassimilable other based on identity and difference). Race continues to be an ascriptive "marker," but the significance of this marker has changed; it is not non-white status *per se* which is problematic so much as the perception of a growing presence of alien cultures (religions, traditions, cultural practices, mores), at odds with the host cultures and historical forms of European national identity.

Though empirically European societies have become multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-racial, national identities have yet to give legitimate recognition to this fact. Whereas it is common in the US to call oneself Italo-American, Irish-American, Jewish-American, and African-American, and consequently to recognize hyphenated identities, in Europe this is as yet unlikely if not impossible so long as traditional national identities tied to the development of European nation-states remain intact. One is French, German, Italian, etc., not Turkish-German, Algerian-French, Somalian-Italian. For many Europeans, a *hypothetical* distinction could be drawn between the middle-class, well-educated, secular, culturally-assimilated and linguistically-fluent non-European (who sheds a prior identity and *becomes* French, German, Dutch, etc.), on the one hand, and the lower-class, uneducated, non-Christian and culturally distinct non-European, on the other. Yet for the new movements and political parties of the Extreme Right and the racist ideologies they express this distinction collapses: all non-Europeans represent a threat; large-scale assimilation is impossible or impractical — hospitality and tolerance should cease, repatriation is the only realistic solution.

The two-volume anthology under review addresses the situation in France where Le Pen's *Front national* (FN) has become an ascendent political force, capturing 14% of the national vote (20-30% in some regions). It has made immigration a dominant issue, setting terms for public debate in which other political parties have largely reacted in either a weak or an opportunistic manner (it has been lost on no one that public opinion polls indicate that 30% of the population sympathizes with the FN's general stance on immigration). While the major parties denounce Le Pen's demagogy, they have failed to articulate principled alternatives, oscillating between traditional rhetorical anti-racist slogans to distinguish themselves from the FN and occasional racist pronouncements to tap these new anti-immigrant sentiments. Giscard used the term "invasion" and suggested a basic change in French citizenship from *droit du sol* to *droit du sang* (nationality by virtue of descent rather than place of birth, thus denying French nationality to immigrant children born in France). Chirac said he could understand the frustration of French workers, living next to immigrant families on the dole — the noise, the odor, the excessive number of children. At the beginning of her inept tenure as Prime Minister, the Socialist Edith Cresson likened the Japanese to ants, questioned the virility of British males, and suggested chartering

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jets to repatriate illegal aliens (*les clandestins*), to which Le Pen quipped, seeing his program appropriated by the governing party, why should the French satisfy themselves with a poor copy rather than have the real thing. Rocard said that France cannot absorb all the poor of the world; Bernard Kouchner, Secretary of State for Humanitarian Action, declaimed *tout n'est pas possible*; while President Mitterrand himself spoke of a "threshold of tolerance" (*seuil de tolérance*), saying it was necessary to send the *clandestins* back to where they came from.

Face au racisme is not merely as an academic study of racism in France, but a partisan, anti-racist intervention in the larger political debate. Its point of departure is not only the Left's total failure to confront Le Pen politically, but — more fundamentally — its inability to even grasp the very nature of contemporary French racism. Moralistic anti-racist denunciations have been ineffective because they depart from an idealized universalistic conception of society where difference is either non-existent or unimportant, to where those who thus act on difference are normatively suspect or worse. Moreover, traditional anti-racism confuses the new cultural racism with the older, discredited biological version, "unscientific" and linked directly to historical fascism.

Since science has undercut the basis of biological racism and fascism has been historically rejected, what more is there to do except denounce racism and appeal to abstract principles of justice (which, in a post-modernist age, ring with less resonance)? Thus traditional anti-racism has no way of addressing the fault line between identity and difference which Le Pen has so skillfully opened and exploited. Worse still, traditional anti-racists fail to grasp the paradoxical nature of Le Pen's operation, having, during the 1980s, cynically appropriated the Left's own slogans of the 1970s in favor of diversity, respecting difference, etc. The identity politics which flowed from these Left conceptions of diversity has also been appropriated and reformulated by Le Pen; one no longer speaks of abstract, rational and self-defining individuals, but rather of individuals reduced to representatives of distinct cultural totalities. The very cornerstone of Le Pen's program, as Taguieff has repeatedly argued, is the right to difference.[2] Biological inequality has been displaced by an *absolutization* and consequent incommensurability of cultural difference. "They" have a right to be different and so do "we." "We" happen to be French, and this is France. Therefore "we" have a right to defend and preserve "our" difference against the *décadence* that necessarily flows from multi-culturalism. As one proponent of the new Extreme Right put it, in calling for the summary expulsion or planned repatriation of immigrants: "It is because we respect ourselves and we respect the others that we refuse to see our country transformed into a multi-cultural society where everyone loses specificity, the others as well as ourselves. Various peoples cannot be summarily judged superior or inferior. They are different and it is necessary to recognize these cultural or physical differences" (Vol. II, pp. 50-51).

2. Cf. Pierre-André Taguieff, "The New Cultural Racism in France," and Alain Policar, "Racism and its Mirror Image," in *Telos* 83 (Spring 1990), pp. 99-122.

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There have been two types of French national identity at play in 20th century politics — one of the Right, the other of the Left — each with its own "imagined community."[3] Both emerged in full form during the Third Republic, a period of inventive nation-building, colonialism and cultural contradiction. With the rise of *Action française*, a distinction later generalized to other European movements of the radical Right was born that between a parasitic *pays légal* (the "politicians" — Jews, socialists, big capitalists, urban cosmopolitans, liberal professionals, republicans) and an exploited though still unspoiled *pays réel* (Catholic, white, provincial, pre-republican and nostalgically royalist). Meanwhile, a dominant republican identity was forged on the Left, based on the laic, universalistic ideals and centralizing practice of the 1789 Revolution. Implicit in this universalism, however, was an expansive nationalism; just as Napoleon's armies embarked upon a *mission civilisatrice*, bringing French revolutionary ideas to a continent shackled by dynastic and religious despotism, the French army during the Third Republic would bring the benefits of *civilisation* to the continent on the other side of the Mediterranean, Africa. In fact, this external colonialism was but an extension of the Third Republic's internal one, whereby the state and its instrumentalities (the engineers, schoolteachers, soldiers, and civil servants who constructed centralized networks of transportation, education, communication and administration) were superimposed on a territory which had been rather remarkable in its diversified regional particularities.[4] Indeed, part of this nation-building operation was to invent a unified, continuous national past which, in the primers schoolchildren read, ran from Vercingétorix (*nos ancêtres les Gaulois*) to the present. As Eugen Weber has repeatedly pointed out, in confronting myths of the Left and Right, French national identity is a recent construct, barely a hundred-years old. Up until the third-quarter of the 19th century, urban travelers and civil servants described much of the "primitive" French countryside in terms remarkably analogous to descriptions of Africa, while French was a foreign language to the overwhelming majority of the rural population which, even if they ritualistically sang *La Marseillaise*, had but an imprecise idea of what it actually meant.[5]

Neither sense of French identity has been hospitable to the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-racial society which France in fact has become. Difference, and how to deal with it, remains problematic. Who is French and what does this signify? Do immigrants' children — even those born, raised and educated in France, deracinated from the national origin of their parents — ever truly become "French" and cease being "immigrants" in the popular consciousness, despite their bearing the formal rights and obligations of French citizenship? Le Pen's *pays réel*, upon which the *droit à la différence* is based, is an inheritance from

3. On the concept of nationalism as an imagined community, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1990).

4. See Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).

5. Eugen Weber, *Peasants*, *op. cit.*, pp. 389, 439-41; cf. also his *My France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991) "Who Sang the Marseillaise?" pp. 92-103.

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the *fin-de-siècle* Right — white, Catholic, anti-republican, anti-cosmopolitan, anti-Semitic. Le Pen's slogan *préférence nationale* is but a recycled version of *La France aux Français*, first coined by Amadis Jacques de Biez in *La Question juive* which, incidentally, he dedicated to his fellow anti-Semite Edouard Drumont.[6] To this narrow sense of French nationalism, Le Pen has added a new and somewhat contradictory dimension — indirectly, partially, and perversely borrowed from the republican inheritance — where France is identified more broadly with the West as a cultural totality. But this common Western identity is accentuated and played off against a long-standing historical difference: an irreconcilable struggle between the Occident and the Orient. According to him, the "Arabs" invading France today through immigration are the descendants of those that Charles Martel beat back at Poitiers in 732, and, even more inclusively, the Persians that the Greeks defeated at Marathon in 490 B.C. Thus the "Arabs" — the historical enemy — should leave France and return to the "Orient," to their own countries, where they belong. This is quite an incredible claim, coming from Le Pen, the one-time colonialist, who in the 1950s passionately argued that Algeria was just as much part of France as Provence, and who personally fought in an unsuccessful war to keep Algeria French! After the loss of France's colonies, the collapse of *Poujadisme*, and in the wake of the New Left's 1968 counter-cultural insurgency, a New Right appeared which sought to distinguish itself from the old. For them (i.e. groups such as *GRECE — Groupement de recherches et d'études sur la civilisation européenne* — and *Club de l'Horloge*) the "Occident" became a central theme in their purported defense of cultural identity. Le Pen subsequently appropriated this theme, just as he lifted "France for the French" (a reclamation of *le pays légal* by *le pays réel*) from the Old Right.

The republican tradition had traditionally embraced immigration but not difference. More than any major European country, France had welcomed immigrants and made the acquisition of French citizenship relatively easy. Just as the Republic, through a *unification jacobine*, had made Frenchmen of Bretons, Normands, Gascons and Bourguignons, it would make Frenchmen of Italians, Greeks, Poles and Spaniards — but also at the price of their specificity, the sacrifice of their difference. This was the meaning of the so-called *creuset français*, the French melting-pot. Second-generation Italians, Greeks, Poles and Spaniards were "simply" French, and not hyphenated Italian-French, Greek-French, Polish-French or Spanish-French with split or multiple identities. In the republican tradition, origin or "blood" was neither a barrier to citizenship nor national identity, as it was and still is in other parts of Europe (e.g., Germany). The only obstacle was the retention of manifest cultural difference. In this regard, a factor leading to French anti-Semitism in the 20th century (one among many) has been the enduring suspicion that Jews, unlike other groups, maintained separate identities and loyalties, privileging Jewishness above Frenchness; Jews, in this perception, would never and could never become "simply" French.

6. Eugen Weber, *My France*, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

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So long as immigrants were primarily European and easily assimilated, cultural difference and its impact on national identity was secondary. However, after WWII, more immigrants began to arrive from the Third World, principally from North Africa; France had to be rebuilt and there was a shortage of labor. In 1946, 88% of the foreign population was of European origin, which would fall to 47% by 1982; by contrast, in 1946, 2.3% of the foreign population came from the Maghreb, which would rise to 38.5% by 1982.[7] Beyond the quantitative magnitude and rate of this transformation, racial and cultural differences were significantly greater than was the case with earlier European groups (language, religion, dress, habits, etc.). Compared to the French at large, they were younger, had many more children, less education, fewer skills and settled disproportionately in urban areas where, as a distinct group, they seemed to place unprecedented strain on local resources (social services, housing, schools, police). By the 1970s, immigration was virtually closed to foreign workers, but the "legal" foreign population (not counting *clandestins*) continued to grow through family reunification allowances and a high birthrate. Poverty, overcrowding, substandard housing and social isolation led to disproportionately higher crime rates and juvenile delinquency (relative to the population at large). External factors (the turbulent nature of Mideast politics, Islamic fundamentalism, terrorism), combined with the size of the domestic Maghrebian population and France's geographical proximity to North Africa, all contributed to mounting xenophobia, particularly in the very urban areas from which the FN draws most of its support. Dramatic events within and without — the Rushdie affair, an isolated though highly publicized case of Islamic girls wearing traditional shawls to a public school (the *foulards* controversy in 1989), the bombing of a French jet, riots in the immigrant *banlieues* of Paris, the Gulf War, the failure of secularism and explosive rise of the FIS in Algeria — all suggest, to an increasing number of Frenchmen, unwanted problems if not worse. A way of life, a French way of life, was being threatened; the presumed cause: immigrants, Third World immigrants, Arabs.

Confronting this ugly mood — expressed in threats and acts of violence, as well as mounting anti-semitic and anti-maghrebian sentiments registered in opinion polls and votes for the FN — Taguieff has assembled a two-volume anthology of critical essays written by the most illustrious French social scientists who have specialized on racism and related themes (Pierre Birnbaum, Gilles Kepel, Nonna Mayer, Patrick Weil and Michel Wieviorka, to name a few). The first volume, *Les moyens d'agir*, is largely a refutation of the FN's exaggerated claims regarding the actual rate and magnitude of immigration, as well as its effect on everyday life (employment, social services, schools, housing, religion and crime). It turns out that the immigrant presence today in France is no greater than it was during the 1920s, that immigrants are performing jobs which French workers no longer seek, and that they pay marginally more into social security

7. Voisard and Ducastelle, *La question immigrée*, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24.

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than they presently receive. Because immigrants are younger and have a higher birthrate, they receive more in family allowances (based on family size) than French families, although this is likely to level off, since birthrate disparities have declined with successive generations of immigrants. Regarding the immigrants' higher crime and incarceration rates, two points are noted: first, much of this is attributable to violations of immigration and naturalization provisions, not common crime; second, if one corrects for age and social class, crime and incarceration rates are not significantly different from the French population. As for the fear of unassimilated, hostile subcultures developing in France, it turns out that immigrant generations born and raised in France have become progressively closer to their French peers than to their respective groups. In other words, they want to be assimilated and they are, in fact, being assimilated. Regarding religion, they are less observant than their parents, having at best a nostalgic connection to Islam. When offered the choice of a foreign language in high school, they overwhelmingly opt for English and German, not Arabic. Given the data presented, it would appear that the consequences of urban concentration distinguish the present immigrant population from those of the past, particularly the pronounced strain on local resources (for example, some urban schools have immigrant enrollments of over 50%). Bearing in mind that images of everyday life presented in the French media tend to be urban (and especially Parisian), one can understand why the term "invasion" has taken hold, despite the fact that immigrants are but 8% of the population and in some regions of France there are practically no immigrants.

The second volume of *Face au racisme, Analyses, hypothèses, perspectives*, is a collection of essays ranging from the social nature and ideological articulation of racism and anti-Semitism to questions pertaining to immigration, cultural difference and citizenship, including well-researched accounts of housing, education and the *Maghrébins* as a distinct group (roughly half the immigrant population). Together with the first volume, this is indispensable reading for anyone interested not only in French racism, but racism in broader comparative terms. It adds to an already impressive literature published recently in France.[8]

One rather interesting tendency in this recent scholarship has been to compare the historical dynamics of racism in France with that of the US, as well as the respective sociological traditions going back to Durkheim in the one and the Chicago School in the other. Two essays reflect this comparative concern: "Relations interethniques et formes d'int*égration*," by Riva Kastoryano; and "Penser 'intégration' des immigrés," by Stéphane Beaud and Gérard Noiriel. While in the US ethnic communities and developing inter-ethnic relations, relatively

8. See René Galissot, *Misére de l'anti-racisme* (Paris: Arcantère, 1985); Nonna Mayer and Pascal Perrineau, *Le Front National à decouvert* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1989); Albert Memmi, *Le Racisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982); Birgitta Orfali, *L'Adhésion au Front National* (Paris: Éditions Kimé, 1990); Pierre-André Taguieff, *La force du prejugé* (Paris: Éditions la Découverte, 1988), Patrick Weil, *La France et ses étrangers* (Paris: Calman-Lévy, 1992); Michel Wieviorka, *L'Espace du racisme* (Paris: Sevil, 1991).

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autonomous from state action, was viewed positively as necessary mediating steps toward integration, in France they were viewed as obstacles to an integration promoted directly by the state. This, of course, was an extension of the internal colonialism carried out by the centralizing French state which had brooked no regional particularity, allowed for no sub-system autonomy, and prevented the articulation of a society which, in fact, became impoverished to the degree that the centralizing, homogenizing state grew stronger. In Durkheim's sociology, the transition from mechanical to organic solidarity was a process where all were deracinated, stripped of prior and "lower" primary ties, in order to fulfill functional roles in a new, more modern, national division of labor. For Durkheim, the schools would play a particularly formative role in integrating immigrants of his day, ensuring that the "second generation" would be stripped of all particularity and any allegiance to primary groups. This also explains why France never developed any tolerance for multi-cultural recognition, and hence found itself unprepared to deal with its contemporary multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-racial, multi-national society. France has become a pluralistic society with no sense of pluralism, no way of dealing with the "others." This is why, for the recent immigrants, no answer can be given to the question: when do they become French and cease being "immigrants"? Two generations, three, five, never? Pluralism entails negotiating terms of identity and difference, not asserting one to the exclusion of the other; but prior French development has provided no historical basis for such negotiations, for a political practice which might get beyond the present impasse.

As impressive a collection as *Face au racisme* is, there are notable gaps. One is the absence of any substantive treatment of the role of the media, particularly the transition from print to electronics, and the "representation" of immigrants in popular culture.[9] The rise of American-style "personality politics" in France suggests the eclipsed hegemony of traditional intellectuals, based in the print media, as molders of public opinion. Both Le Pen on the Right and Bernard Tapie on the Left have cultivated popular bases largely through television, bypassing the print media and the Establishment in general. Ironically, Tapie has been the only personality on the Left who has been successful in confronting Le Pen in Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, where the FN had cultivated a significant constituency. A former pop singer, self-made entrepreneur and Marseilles football team owner, Tapie had never been part of the generic "political class," nor was he part of the rather insular, university-educated, technocratic socialist elite. Like Le Pen, Tapie is an "outsider," viewed with suspicion by the intelligentsia, though not with the manifest contempt this group reserves for the FN's leader.

Though *Face au racisme* contains implicit comparative dimensions, it fails to systematically place French racism within a broader European context. This omission is crucial since the anthology was intended as a political intervention,

9. For a fine analysis of the way race is represented in the media and British popular culture, see Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (London: Hutchinson, 1987).

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as an intellectual confrontation to rising racism and xenophobia. What is happening in France is not uniquely French, but a phenomenon common to all of Western Europe; certainly a broader, comparative focus would help undermine the sense of French exceptionalism one often detects in French polemics on racism, while analytically enriching the domestic dimension so well elaborated. Three comparative dimensions come to mind. The first concerns global trends in international migration from sender to receiver nations,[10] and how France fits into the larger configuration. The second concerns immigration problems within the further articulation of the European Community, particularly controlling the flow of illegal immigration, changing concepts of citizenship and the mobility of labor. The third concerns bilateral or multilateral comparisons with other European states, especially those which were also imperial powers and have had comparable experiences dealing with former colonial immigrants.[11]

It is clear that problems of immigration and racism are part of a larger constellation of issues destabilizing European politics, as recent elections in France, Italy and Germany indicate. Not only have nationalist parties made impressive gains, but dominant centrist parties are losing ground to alternative or even anti-system movements (e.g., ecologists, the Italian Leagues). Some of this, no doubt, is due to an eclipse of the traditional nation-state by newer regional and supra-national configurations; some of it engendered by the uncertainties of post-Cold War politics, rendering traditional Left-Right distinctions rapidly obsolete. What is there, for example, distinctively "Left" regarding the aforementioned Tapie or, for that matter, the French Socialist Party which already jettisoned any transformative goals after coming to power a decade ago in favor of managing what Moishe Gonzales dubbed "Gaulism with a human face."[12] Racism might very well be a response to new uncertainties facing European polities and the growing ineffectiveness of threadbare conventional parties, programs and ideologies. The problem posed by *Face au racisme*, elaborating a new basis for anti-racism, remains unsolved; its telling critique of traditional anti-racism generates no new program or practice, except centering attention on cultural difference rather than biology. What appears necessary is a new non-statist, non-bureaucratic political framework wherein issues of identity and difference can be constitutively negotiated — not resolved abstractly by a magic new intellectual formula, settled administratively by technocrats, or left to the rabble-rousing of opportunistic demagogues.

Frank Adler

10. See Aristide Zolberg, "The Next Wave: Migration Theory for a Changing World," *International Migration Review*, Vol. XXIII, No. 3 (Fall 1989).

11. Some suggestive comparative observations regarding racism in England and France are contained in Emmanuel Todd, "France-Angleterre: le tournoi raciste," in *Le nouvel observateur*, March 26, 1992.

12. Moishe Gonzales, "Gaulism With a Human Face," in *Telos* 55 (Spring 1983).

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Workers vs. Intellectuals in Solidarność

Lawrence Goodwyn, *Breaking the Barrier: The Rise of Solidarity in Poland* (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 1991), 466 pp.
Roman Laba, *The Roots of Solidarity: A Political Sociology of Poland's Working Class Democratization* (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1991), 247 pp.
David Ost, *Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-politics: Opposition and Reform in Poland since 1968* (Philadelphia: Temple U. Press, 1990), 279 pp.

Taken together, these three books mark a turning point in the literature in English on *Solidarność*. In contrast to the historical and political works preceding them, these books are not simple chronicles, nor are they mobilizing apologias. Each author offers a critical interpretation, retelling the familiar story to argue that *this* is the real meaning of *Solidarność*, and that other social movements — in East-Central Europe and elsewhere — should draw the appropriate lessons.

Perhaps the most important conclusion has to do with the conflict between workers and intellectuals. *Solidarność* earned its place in history not just as the first independent trade union in the Soviet Bloc or for its meteoric success in organizing ten million people, but for the unprecedented cooperation between workers and the intelligentsia. By no means a perfectly smooth relation, from the beginning it reflected historically-rooted animosities in Polish society. But that made the achievement all the more astonishing. From the vantage of hindsight, it is almost a miracle that a fractious nation such as the Poles (according to the old canard "when two Poles meet, the result is three political parties") could produce the massive, dignified nonviolence and cooperation of *Solidarność*.

The debate stimulated by the three books under review must be seen in light of this extraordinary experience in solidarity. Ost describes *Solidarność* as a broad-based movement expressing the strivings of society as a whole, the culmination of a continuum of political opposition stretching over the entire post-war history of Poland. Laba and Goodwyn reject this, on grounds that such a gloss occludes the struggles of workers spanning the same period, which in fact were more directly responsible for *Solidarność* than a nebulous "opposition." (The three books were published close enough in time to be virtually unavailable to one another, although Goodwyn cites Ost and lavishly acknowledges his debt to Laba's earlier research.)

Ost's book is an insider's account of the Polish Opposition. It successfully manages to speak the idiom of that community without sacrificing critical objectivity. His narrative is lively enough to entice the casual reader, yet sufficiently sophisticated to challenge old hands to re-examine cherished beliefs. Laba and

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Goodwyn disdain this insider attitude. Not only do they draw a clear line of demarcation between themselves and their subjects of study, but they explicitly condemn the self-possession of the Polish Opposition. Outsiders on principle, both reject the "scholarly over-identification with the sundry roles played by intellectuals in the politics of protest" (*Breaking the Barrier*, p. xxix).

For Ost, *Solidarność* constituted the embodiment of the Opposition in the 1980s, the latest and most successful in a series of strategic responses to the question: What do we do about the Leninist state? In the 1950s and 1960s, the strategy was revisionism, the attempt at reforming party and state structures to bring them into line with their professed humanitarian ideals. The brutal suppression of student protests in 1968 and worker strikes in 1970-71 put an end to reformist impulses within the Opposition. By the mid-1970s a new, "anti-political" strategy began to take shape. Articulated and put into practice primarily by KOR (the Committee to Defend Workers), it turned away from trying to affect state institutions and focused on reconstructing society from below. Under the slogan "self-organization of society," KOR activists propagated a variety of cultural and organizational forms for public and semi-public activity (such as distribution of financial and legal aid to those persecuted by the state, and underground publishing). The goal was to establish and defend a "civil society" (not a word in use at the time), defined as a social space for activity by engaged citizens independent of the party-state. When *Solidarność* burst upon the scene it adopted this anti-political stance and made it successful beyond all expectations. But soon thereafter the anti-political project showed itself to be inherently contradictory. The more civil society asserted its independence, the more it challenged the Leninist state. Following a comment by Leszek Kolakowski, Ost points out that Poland was not a totalitarian regime, at least not a fully effective one. Nevertheless, it sought to penetrate all public institutions with its ideology. Independent oases could not be tolerated. Thus, inexorably, anti-politics headed for political confrontation.

The resolution pursued by *Solidarność*, as foreshadowed by the Gdansk Accords in 1980 and brought to fruition in the "round table" negotiations of 1989, was a "neo-corporatist" one. Corporatism is a non-democratic mode of interest representation in which sectors of society reach a political *modus vivendi* through a negotiated settlement. In Poland, where Leninism precluded a pluralist solution, an accommodation between representatives of society and the state provided the most democratic possible outcome, for it allowed a voice to those who had not had one before. (This was unlike more conventional corporatist arrangements, where sectors such as labor, employers, the professions, agriculture, etc. are involved, with the state acting "above" particular interests.)

This, in outline, is Ost's argument, without its sinuous detail of biography and social history. Its novelty lies in the provocative categories he applies and in his conclusions. Ost calls anti-politics the "third road," neither Left nor Right, not really-existing socialist nor really-existing capitalist road. The project of building "civil society" by acting as though people were already free he

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terms "anticipatory democracy." He gleefully comments that Poland today is the only place in the world where New Leftists from 1968 still play a significant role in politics. In a hopeless situation they reworked what it meant to be radical, and thereby "held out the hope of a democratic transformation that would result in a more participatory system than is common in the West, yet avoid the usual authoritarian traps. . ." (*Anti-politics* p. vii).

Ost acknowledges that the way things turned out falls far short of fulfilling this hope. *Solidarność*, then, constitutes a negative lesson about "the possibilities and pitfalls of this alternative kind of politics . . . [of] the democratic left's third road alternative, its exclusive focus on civic activity and open communication, its disregard for the state . . . in short, its politics of anti-politics." Ultimately, the *Solidarność* experience is "inadequate, though not irrelevant, as a model for the future." It had the ideals right, but failed to work out "an institutional model for political interaction" (p. 203). This is a warning for the rest of East and Central Europe, and for new social movements wherever they appear.

Goodwyn pays no fainter homage to "the activists of *Solidarność* and the people of Poland" (*Barrier*, dedication) than does Ost, but his interpretation of the real meaning of *Solidarność* is diametrically opposed to *Anti-politics*. He regards the assumption that *Solidarność* is organically a part of the history of the Polish Opposition as the main mistake perpetrated by 99% of scholarship on Poland. In Goodwyn's view the central task of scholars who study social movements is "to discover the causal connections between idea and action." Instead of taking the trouble to do this, most observers blithely assume that "the act of writing down an idea — in a manifesto, for example — becomes without further activity the cause of any subsequent movement that can be seen in any way to be associated with the idea" (p. xxvi). The Polish Opposition, Goodwyn contends, has woven a myth about its own leading role in the post-war history of Poland, and that mythology has been swallowed whole by other intellectuals who have enshrined it as Truth in decades of journalism and pseudo-scholarship. All the explanations of KOR's causal role in giving rise to *Solidarność* are examples of this specious reasoning.

Such myth-mongering (not Goodwyn's expression) consistently distorts history. In standard versions of the story of 1956, for example, there is precious little reference to the organized self-activity of working people. Instead, the received wisdom peremptorily dismisses the "few days of chaotic rioting" in Poznan, while dwelling at length on the challenge to the party by the critical Left intelligentsia and on the agitation for workers' councils in industrial plants which, unfortunately, were soon coopted by the state. Goodwyn painstakingly reconstructs a four month long process of discussion, planning, and, finally, concerted action by workers at the Cegielski locomotive works. It was an experience in organized self-activity in which workers learned much about the nature of the state they lived in, how it regimented their lives, and what they needed to do to change it. The riots occured when these organized "self-conscious" workers (not a word Goodwyn sanctions, though this is what he means) were physically and politically overwhelmed by well-intentioned people who

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wanted to help, but had not had the Cegielski learning experience.[1]

Next, Goodwyn turns his revisionist talents on the 1970 Baltic Coast strikes, the 1976 Radom and Ursus "riots," and the organizing on the Baltic Coast in the run up to August 1980. Following Laba's research, he claims that on the seacoast workers developed a knowledge of what was needed — trade unions independent of the party — and the mode of democratic self-assertion most effective in pursuit of this goal — interfactory strike committees. This directly contradicts the oft-repeated claim that it was KOR that raised the consciousness of workers from "gut issues" to the politically sophisticated demand for free trade unions. Moreover, the places where KOR presumably had the greatest influence (the industrial plants in Radom and Ursus) never developed any sort of coherent program or action strategy.

Breaking the Barrier is a big book — long in pages and in ambition. It is full of fascinating historical description marshalled to support a grand argument about the practice of social history, a large argument about the overbearing relation of intellectuals to everyone with whom they come into contact, and a burst of smaller ones about the post-war history of Poland. It is also a frustrating book, in part because it offers so many provocative invitations to discussion which must go unrequited, reading being the one-way street that it is. However, the book's excessive repetition of its principal themes, as well as sections of narrative, grinds the reader down rather than convincing. A solid pruning would have done wonders for readability and effectiveness.

Interestingly, Goodwyn presents himself not primarily as a historian, but as a "specialist on social movements." Historians from time immemorial have berated social scientists for leaping to generalizations without firm footing in historical facts. Goodwyn takes this further. Details, yes, he admonishes, but the study of social movements also requires us to "rethink modern politics and contemporary social relations" (p. xxvi). After performing the necessary underlabor, clearing away the encrusted habits of mind that lead most observers to mistake ideas for action, it is possible to see what really happens. According to Goodwyn, the real thing looks something like this: In normal times, i.e., times governed by received cultural norms, people are socialized by the weight of tradition into doing what has always been done. It seems crazy to do otherwise, even when the normal order is oppressive, because it puts the individual at great risk. Yet brave visionaries begin to think about changing things. They talk among themselves, privately at first, in their kitchens. Perhaps nothing comes of it, because of the danger. The barrier that prevents ideas from moving to action is the barrier of fear. And ignorance. People simply do not know what is safe to do. Slowly, if a variety of conditions are right, through small actions at first, people gain experience in self-activity. This is the birth of politics; the birth of a social movement of democratic self-assertion.

1. Goodwyn's account of June in Poznan is based largely on his reading of *Poznanski Czerwiec 1956*, "June in Poznan," a collection of essays, oral history and documents edited by Maciejewski and Trojanowiczowa (Poznan, 1981).

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Democratic forms grow on this soil, and only here — not in intellectuals' manifestos, not in spontaneous eruptions of rage.

The task of the specialist in social movements is to dig around for the precise moments when these initial conversations take place, for they are the "missing links" connecting private ideas to public action. More arduous than browsing through the documents produced by other intellectuals, this work demands techniques that can penetrate the cloud of myths and explanations of causality-at-a-distance such as "frustrated nationalism," "the pope's visit," or "KOR's instructions," all of which have been proposed in the received literature as causal explanations of the rise of *Solidarność*. Patient probing will reveal the interior of the movement, in this case a workers' movement which left few written records. It will uncover the building blocks of democratic forms, the only sure traces of historical causality.

Goodwyn distills this methodological model from his research on Poland, but he claims that it has a universal applicability. Because it has a commonsense appeal, it is worth reflecting a moment on the implications of this claim. As a methodological prescription, probing the kitchens of a social movement to discover the causal links of history is questionable. (For one thing, hardly any of the kitchens in Poland is large enough for two people to sit down, much less have a conversation!) Such primal moments must exist, and pinpointing them is certainly a researcher's peak experience. But as brute facts, stripped of cultural context, do they really reveal the causal links of history?

This research program might be dubbed the "searching for Fanelli" technique. Imagine that someone wanted to learn the real cause of Spanish anarchism. Historical research will show no anarchist activity on the Iberian peninsula, outside of a few Fourierists, before 1868. That year Bakunin sent an emissary by the name of Giuseppe Fanelli to Spain. In a series of meetings Fanelli spread anarchist ideas by his speeches and the few pamphlets he brought along. The rest, they say . . . . These are facts. Without them no explanation of Spanish anarchism is complete. But would tracing Fanelli's contacts, and then their contacts, be the best route to explaining Spanish anarchism?

This is a caricature which does not do justice to Goodwyn's narrative. Yet methodologically there is something to the "Fanelli comparison." Goodwyn's technique is "deep" description — penetrating the interior of the movement, feeling around in the murk to find the link between idea and action, then moving from link to link, despite being held back by culture (the dead hand of tradition) or cultural explanations (the obscurantist prattle of intellectuals). In his retelling of the story of the workers' movement that culminated in *Solidarność*, Goodwyn brushes aside the thick webs of culture and religion. He records that workers in 1956 carried a banner through the streets reading "Bread! Freedom! Religion!" He remarks on the omnipresence of white-and-red flags on striking factories. But he concludes that references to them are overrated: "Nationalism and religion and religious nationalism worked their will [sic!] on Poles in every stratum of society, including workers. But for the working class in Leninist Poland,

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the most compelling drive was for hour-by-hour and day-by-day relief from the terrible confinement of life under the thumb of the party . . ." (p. 374).

Unfortunately, there are no "pure" links between idea and action. By denying their conventional cultural and social context, Goodwyn simply substitutes his own meaning system. He may have succeeded in telling the kitchens-to-social-movement story, and it is not false. But it is not an adequate description of the workers' movement that became *Solidarność* because it denies that movement's self-understanding, as expressed in its symbols. Inexplicably, Goodwyn leaves some of his most interesting findings virtually undocumented. He suggests that the Baltic seacoast was consistently the locus of protests, and, eventually, of *Solidarność* itself, in part because of coastal workers' contact with foreign seamen. These seamen, well-known for syndicalism, communism, and socialism, are alleged to have infected their brothers in Poland with these ideas to such a degree that Polish workers at one time entertained the idea of joining the international union of maritime workers. This suggestion is too intriguing to be left dangling, yet we are at a loss to follow it up because Goodwyn refers only to two anonymous interviews he made in 1982 and 1985.

Many times throughout the book Goodwyn complains that the standard literature ignores the wave of occupation strikes that overspread Poland in 1976, focussing instead on the spectacular but futile riots at Radom and Ursus. As evidence he cites more of his interviews. This is, once again, very frustrating. Anyone who "reads Poland" knows the standard literature. What is impossible to know here is what to make of Goodwyn's tantalizing assertions. What happened at these strikes? Where did they take place? It would have been much more valuable for Goodwyn to spend more energy tracking down hard evidence and less on pillorying the intelligentsia.

One last, very small point, but characteristic of Goodwyn's enterprise. The Gdansk shipyards in 1980 sported a banner reading "Workers of all factories, unite!" Goodwyn puzzles whether this was irony, nostalgia, or just confusion (p. 41). Like the other cultural paraphernalia of August — the flowers on the gate, the pope's picture, the national flag, Walesa's antics — they were grist for Radio Free Europe, KOR's propaganda, and foreign journalists. Goodwyn concludes that symbolism may be good for mythmaking, but is fundamentally untrustworthy as a source of information. The banner's case, however, contradicts this. Its message was clear. Clear, that is, to someone who knows Polish enough to know that "unite" also means "to make a phone connection." The workers were not confused: they were protesting the communications cut-off and laughing at the state's ideology.

Roman Laba, like Goodwyn, begins with the question: Where did *Solidarność* come from? His answer is laid out in a taut argument, meticulously documented. (That is an understatement. References comprise one fourth of his book). There are two schools of thought on working class organization. The first Laba calls the "elite thesis," which maintains that left to themselves workers cannot articulate political demands above "gut issues," that they need help communicating

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with each other, with their potential allies and their enemies, and that on their own they cannot form organizations sophisticated and flexible enough to achieve their aims. This is by far the larger category, including Lenin, most Polish oppositionists, foreign scholars and journalists. If this elite thesis is correct, if *this* is the lesson of *Solidarność*, Laba comments wrily, then Lenin has triumphed after all.

The contrary view, championed by *The Roots of Solidarity*, is that the workers' movement in Poland had its own dynamism, expressed in a coherent ideology and creative struggle against the Leninist state. And it won. In concise, methodical fashion, Laba retraces the events of 1970 on the Baltic coast through an archive of oral testimony compiled by a team of independent researchers associated with *Solidarność*. As a work of historical scholarship, his account of the street protests, repression, strikes, and negotiations *cum* repression of 1970-71 is unsurpassed in English. This narrative alone makes Laba's book a valuable contribution to the literature on 20th century Poland.

Based on this evidence, Laba convincingly substantiates his positive thesis: 1970 saw the birth of a coherent, self-identified workers' movement, which acted, organized, and negotiated without "help" from outside. Further, this movement constitutes the ideological and organizational source of *Solidarność*. A comparative analysis of lists of demands from hundreds of factories, dating from 1970, 1971, and 1980, shows a remarkable congruence: pay raises, free trade unions, distribution of wealth according to egalitarian principles, end to party and police privileges, and an end to censorship dominate virtually every list. The reappearance of the same sorts of demands — ten years apart — indicates a continuity over time (despite the lack of any formal organization from 1971 to 1980). The politics of the demands — their egalitarian nature and systemic range — exhibit not just sophistication, but a determination to succeed.

For Laba, the bridge from 1971 to 1980 is memory. Not just the memories of the individual workers present at events and who in their kitchens passed this wisdom to others — though without question such scenes must have been repeated countless times — but collective memory. But how to study its effects?

The answer must begin with techniques capable of analyzing political culture, in this case a working class culture of resistance to a Leninist state. In a chapter entitled "Sacred Politics," Laba uses such techniques as he surveys the popular art of *Solidarność* in 1980-81 and in the early martial law period. He remarks on *Solidarność*'s creative graphic integration of two revolutionary traditions, separated since the 19th century: the national insurrectionary (which emphasized fraternity) and the social revolutionary (which promoted equality). Therefore, to pigeonhole *Solidarność* as either one is to miss its innovative power. The ritual aspects of the massive strikes, the processions to commemorate anniversaries of workers' protests as well as national days, the vast outdoor Masses, reinforced this integration of national sentiment and social justice. This point has to be emphasized in all writing, including this review article, which dwells on the national symbolism used by *Solidarność*. The movement was not just nationalism repackaged as workerism. It was a creative synthesis — deeply national and deeply proletarian.

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Two things need be said to those who find this melange of symbolism confusing and contradictory. First, it was only confusing to outsiders who had not had the experience of integration, or at least had not understood its importance. Second, without this symbolic context of meanings rooted deep in a cultural inheritance, the brute physical acts of striking and organizing would not have had the mobilizing power that they did. Put another way, without the people's (national) culture (these can be translated by the same word in Polish), there could have been no *Solidarność*.

Laba also addresses the sinister implications of expressions such as "national integration" by comparing *Solidarność*' graphic art to that of fascist and Communist movements. Even in the most bitter days of martial law, *Solidarność*'s symbols were free of aggressive, distorted enemy images. "No Jews, capitalists, priests, kulaks, Trotskyites, or imperialists appear. Enemies are not portrayed as spiders, serpents, skulls, vultures, mad dogs, lice or pigs." This stands in sharp contrast to the de-humanizing images common to other 20th century movements. However, in the effort to make his positive case for the coherence and creative continuity of the workers' movement all the stronger, Laba overstates his negative case against the intellectuals. He takes offence at their arrogance in descriptions of their own indispensability. Admittedly, chummy self-importance and an insular worldview are all-too-frequent traits among the Polish intelligentsia. But there must be more to the negative case than personal recriminations and caste characteristics.

Was the activity of (intellectual) elites, specifically KOR, "causal" in relation to *Solidarność*? For all his sophistication, Laba misstates the terms of the argument. He provocatively dumps Lenin, the Polish party's press, KOR activists, and foreign pundits into one sack of homologous magnitudes labeled "the elite thesis." If the charge is that KOR was a cabal of political organizers bent on manipulating individual workers and the workers' movement for their own ideological purposes (classic Leninism), then why did they not "go to the people" and organize? KOR was founded to solicit and distribute material assistance to workers harassed by the state. But it was never KOR's stated or implicit purpose to fashion a movement with itself at the head. In fact, when the last worker was released from jail in 1977, KOR almost disbanded, its work accomplished. The founders decided to change their name to KSS-KOR (Committee for Social Self-Defense, with the old initials retained out of nostalgia). Defense continued to be necessary, because people were still being harassed, though at the moment not workers as such. The newspaper associated with KOR, *Robotnik* (*The Worker*), took that name, not just to appeal to workers, but as a way of identifying with the social democratic and national insurrectionary tradition of the pre-war PPS (Polish Socialist Party). It is also worth mentioning that the extended KOR network was a sizable movement in its own right. Couriers, people who collected contributions and distributed them, who gathered in formation and wrote bulletins and newsletters, printers, drivers, along with activists who took part in public protests such as hunger strikes, formed a community that exerted a growing influence

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on cultural/intellectual circles, and through them, on public life. None of this remotely resembles plans for creating, infiltrating, or assuming leadership positions in an ingenuous workers' movement.

The causation-claim, then, must be something different. Perhaps Kolakowski captured it: "Although the intellectuals grouped in KOR did not cause the strikes out of which Solidarity emerged . . . KOR's influence on the way workers voiced their grievances and articulated their demands was certainly essential." (*Roots of Solidarity*, p. 3). But on the matter of "influence" he is contradicted by Jacek Kuron, who commented on the Polish August, "I thought it was impossible, it was impossible, and I still think it was impossible." (*Breaking the Barrier*, p. 181). And by Adam Michnik, "Solidarity arose, without us and against us, although we always considered it to be [KOR's] child. An illegitimate one, you might say." (*Anti-politics*, p. 77). However we assess these comments, they do not portray intellectuals pulling the strings of worker-puppets.

Yet, even if the specific charges of direction "from afar" and dominant ideology be discounted, the volatile relation of workers to intellectuals cannot be simply ignored. Laba and Goodwyn have performed a service by placing the issue on the agenda of Poland scholarship. But to move the debate beyond the stage of mutual recrimination, it is necessary to plunge further into certain issues of culture and old social structure. Each author expresses an appreciation of this historical/sociological dimension, though none pursues it in sufficient depth.

"Old social structure" refers to features of Polish society that have their antecedents in the 19th century configuration of peasants, proletarians, and the intelligentsia — with the notable absence of a national commercial bourgeoisie. In other words, the peasants, workers, and intelligentsia of late 20th century Poland have more in common with their "old" antecedents than they do with more "modern," economically-determined classes.

Consider "the intelligentsia," an anomaly in modern times. It will not do to update this term by using it interchangeably with "intellectuals," or to import Seymour Martin Lipset's often cited definition from *Political Man* "All those who create, distribute, and apply culture." (To clarify still further: the intelligentsia consists not just of the relatively few "thinkers," but also of teachers — grade school to university, all the professions, army officers, government bureaucrats, artists, and movie actors, among others — without regard to their income level.) The intelligentsia appeared in its classic form in 19th century Russia and Poland. It can be defined as a social "stratum" comprised of those who have a higher than secondary education, and who identify with the traditions, values, and mission of this group to uphold certain shared ideas, most notably, the national idea. The word itself, in Polish, almost always appears in a collective sense. The singular, "intelligent," is an oddity rarely used.

Arguably, workers in Poland, despite being clearly an economic class, have more in common with their forebears in late 19th and early 20th century Poland than with their counterparts in western industrial countries. (Their immiserated conditions of work and living, their total dependence on an alien, technologically

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primitive industrial regime, and not least, their national identification infused with a penchant for collective industrial action support this assertion.) This old social structure, defined by status and a system of mutual relations rather than economic position, survived in Poland well past its disappearance in other industrializing countries (primarily in the West, but in the Czech lands as well). Its persistence has to do with a long period of statelessness under the partitions during which language, national culture, and religion were the features that identified Polish society and drove its claim to statehood.

It has been argued that this old structure was destroyed by the Nazi and then the Stalinist occupations, and that it certainly was dealt a final blow by the ideological flattening of People's Poland.[2] But the opposite is true. These attacks on the national identity only reinforced the old social structure's key charcteristics, in part on the strength of the intelligentsia's efforts to preserve and disseminate Polish culture. Moreover, the success of the Polish Opposition, including *Solidarność* up to the "round table," is in large measure due to the obstinate, if anomalous, perseverance of the old structure. Each "class" fought the Leninist state on its own ground — and held it at bay. Peasants resisted collectivization, and by their independence helped deflect Stalinism. The proletariat and the intelligentsia resisted, too, as demonstrated by the books under review. It is also interesting to note that KOR's appeals for self-organization were issued to the *społeczeństwo*, usually translated as "society." (The modern concept of society does not convey the old Polish sense of organic unity — thus "national community" might be a better translation). Three consequences follow from this excursion into sociology — each important for understanding *Solidarność* and the unanticipated social dislocation that followed the transformation of 1989.

First, the culture associated with the old structure is communitarian and mutualist, not individualist or pluralist. The relation of particular "classes" to each other within the national community is perceived as organic (one part needs the other) rather than as a contention of discrete, competing interests. In a more modern society, danger from an external foe may produce a class coalition, i.e., a temporary association of separate interests. In the "old" structure, however, the common cause antedates the present crisis. Calls to unity are therefore calls to affirm the pre-existing consensus by rising to defend it.

The "causation-claim" debate can be recast in terms of this historical/sociological analysis, though, admittedly, it requires a much more elaborate discussion than can be given here. KOR's claim to "raise consciousness" in society at large, and among workers in particular, had primarily to do with calling them to acknowledge the pre-existing consensus, the shared idea of national community. It was not a call to defy the dead hand of tradition, to break through inherited culture (as Goodwyn suggests) but the opposite: to accept the symbols of tradition which identify "us" as who we are, and to act accordingly. If anything, this was a

2. See Alexander Gella, *Development of Class Structure in Eastern Europe: Poland and her Southern Neighbors* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989). See also my review of this book in *The Polish Review* Vol. 36, No. 2 (1991).

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"reawakening" rather than a "raising" of consciousness. Through his analysis of popular art, Laba demonstrates precisely how *Solidarność* responded to this cultural inheritance and used its symbols to mobilize for action.

Moreover, this "consensus-culture" helps put in perspective the claim that Kuron's statement "Don't burn party headquarters, form your own committees!" was the source of workers' wisdom on the subject. Attribution of shared ideas is problematic. For Western scholars, "received wisdom" is suspect: an idea is not worth much unless one makes it one's own through critical examination in an adversarial give and take. But "criticize authority" is itself a cultural value, one not prized among the Old Polish intelligentsia — nor, for that matter, among *Solidarność*'s workers. For them, an idea (especially "the" national idea) was valuable not because it was someone's private achievement, but because it was shared, because it was a basis on which the entire community could stand. Thus received wisdom — as long as it is "ours" — is not inherently weak. Even loose attribution of the type "everybody knows that . . ." can communicate knowledge. Laba mentions the significance of rumors as a means of folkloric transmission of information during the *Solidarność* period. Not factual, but "very powerful in their emotional and explanatory content, rumors identified the problem and . . . constituted the fundamental myths of the state's illegitimacy" (*Roots of Solidarity*, p. 130). Rumor is thus knowledge that, once spoken, becomes common property. Undeniably, Kuron's statement had become Opposition folklore. As such it ought to be acknowledged as efficacious, even if not formally "causative."

Second, the "old" social structure — so decisive in making *Solidarność* what it was — has reached the limit of its historical existence. Paradoxically, the *Solidarność* victory of 1989 has accomplished what forty years of Soviet ideology could not — the destruction of old Polish society. Peasants must now become commercial farmers or be forced off their land by economies of scale and an expanding service sector in the countryside. Workers watch as their industrial plants, the mainstays of *Solidarność*, are being dismantled. They face unemployment and retraining in the inexorable restructuring of an antiquated, exhausted industrial infrastructure. And the intelligentsia are finding few job descriptions that list "demonstrated skill at articulating the national idea" as a qualification.

In searching for the meaning of *Solidarność*, the three authors have missed the most prodigious event of 1989 — the social revolution which has once and for all destroyed the old social structure. It was not a welcome revolution, nor one that was anticipated. For all that, it is irreversible. The difficulty people are having in adjusting to a market economy and democratic institutions, not to mention to a tidal wave of commercial culture surging in from the West, is attributed by many commentators to forty years of "sovietization." "*Homo sovieticus*," they say, is the problem, because he cannot adapt to new ways. But it would seem that the transformation has been so wrenching because the "problem" has a much older geneology. Peasants who thought that victory over Communism would let them farm in peace, feeding their families and Poland as they

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always knew they could, workers who expected at long last to labor in dignity, to be able to improve the material lot of their families and not have their production wasted or bundled off to the Soviet Union, and the intelligentsia who hoped at last to be free of state restrictions in their work, are stunned that none of this has come to pass. They are furious to learn that impersonal market forces will determine whether they get enough fertilizer or save their jobs.

Third, this entire discussion, including the three books under review, has not been about all of Poland, but only about that (significant) portion which identified itself with the shared idea of national community inherited from the old social structure. For it is not true that this structure survived intact to 1989, despite the fact that it survived sufficiently to be responsible for the appearance and victory of *Solidarność*. It is likewise not true that *Solidarność* had the 100% support of the Polish population, mythmaking by the workers and intelligentsia of *Solidarność* to the contrary notwithstanding.

Throughout the forty years of People's Poland, alongside the self-identified nation (or "the people" — again, these can be translated by the same Polish word) who struggled against the system, there lived the "other" Poland, not mentioned in Opposition texts or the *Solidarność* literature. It consisted of people from all levels of society who remained unmoved by calls to risk personal safety on behalf of the national community. The complex of traditional religious, cultural, and historical-insurrectionary symbols were to them "only history." They may have been appealing as folklore or even as the stuff of Sunday sermons, but they certainly were not worth dying for, or even losing one's job over. It seemed more important to feed one's family and live more or less honestly. This sort of person saw nothing morally corrupt in joining the party to get a better job, or to have the opportunity to travel abroad to earn money for a bigger apartment. Many people who felt this way were cold opportunists, ready to step on corpses to improve their own condition. But many others — most others — were not guilty of anything more than wanting to maximize in a minimalist world.

Those Westerners who become irritated by the self-importance and chumminess of the intelligentsia-Opposition, who are dismayed at the "reactionary" religiosity and nationalism of the *Solidarność* workers, ought to know that this same irritation and dismay resonated throughout the "other Poland." The choice back then was stark: identify with the myth of national community, or rationally go about one's business, pursuing private interests.

Discussions of Polish society by Poland watchers rarely mention the "other" Poland, in part out of "national" embarassment.[2] Gordon Skilling, who writes on Czecho-Slovakia, insists that if "civil society" is defined as all social activity beyond the reach of the state, then it must include the semi-legal wheeling and dealing characteristic of Soviet-type systems, and the frankly illegal smuggling and theft familiar to every system. In the last several decades Polish "tourists"

2. Notable exceptions are Elzbieta Tarkowska and Jacek Tarkowski, "Social Disintegration in Poland: Civil Society or Amoral Familism?" and Mira Marody, "On Polish Political Attitudes," both in *Telos* 89 (Fall 1991).

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have become legendary for commercial transactions accomplished during travel abroad. A trip to Turkey, via Greece, returning through Armenia and then the Moscow airport yielded handsome profits to those who knew what they were doing. It was nothing (very) illegal, but a far cry from the noble ideals of the old Polish social structure.

The "other" Poland is visible today in the proliferation of street bazaars and newly-opened small shops. For the first time in history, there is a burgeoning Polish commercial-shopkeeper class. It also can be detected in voting behavior. The strong showing by a Polish-Peruvian-Canadian presidential candidate among voters from mid-sized cities and towns can be interpreted as a protest vote. The "other" Poles, alienated from the big cities and the intelligentsia/industrial worker-dominated culture of *Solidarność*, were taking their opportunity to make a political statement. The same conclusion can be reached by looking at the steadily dropping voter turnout.

Recent debates within *Telos* have focused on the relation of workers to intellectuals in *Solidarność* as part of a broad exploration of New Class liberalism vs. an emerging populism.[3] Participants in this discussion have variously identified *Solidarność* with a sympathetically conceived populism (Goodwyn) or criticized the intellectual circles associated with the post-1989 "Solidarnosc governments" for New Class elitism (Ost, Michael). Others have described the Polish situation from within (Michnik, Elzbieta Tarkowska and Jacek Tarkowski, and Mira Marody), while Piccone and rest of the *Telos* staff have sought to locate these accounts within a more general framework, pointing to "federal populism" as an alternative to the failures of liberalism.

While the "new populist" or "federal populist" perspective challenges conventional political thinking, several problems need clarification before it can be meaningfully applied to Poland. First, it is necessary to identify prospective "new populists" or, for that matter, who the "liberals" might be. Second, how does the historical sociology of the old Polish social structure, as outlined above, affect the discussion on the conflict between the New Class and populist movements? Third, what of the "other Poland"? Is it part of the old, disintegrating order, part of the newly-emerging one, or some third force?

Goodwyn champions populism, which he identifies with the real *Solidarność*. But whom does he mean? In 1990 the *Solidarność* organization made a great

3. In *Telos* 88 (Summer 1991), Lawrence Goodwyn has compared the misrepresentation of populism among historians of the American South with the writing on *Solidarność* ("Rethinking Populism: Paradoxes of Historiography and Democracy"). In the same issue John Michael ("The Intellectual in Un-civil Society: Michnik, Poland, and Community") examined the incongruence of universalist values in a modern political context. A "Special Section on Poland" in *Telos* 89 (Fall 1991) included contributions from David Ost ("The Crisis of Liberalism in Poland"), an interview with Adam Michnik, and two sociological descriptions of Polish society by the Tarkowskis, *op. cit.*, and Marody, *op. cit.*, accompanied by another article by Paul Piccone ("The Crisis of Liberalism and the Emergence of Federal Populism" providing a comprehensive overview of the past and possible predicament of populism.

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effort to focus on purely trade union affairs, which entailed excluding many intellectuals. The separation, however, was not on class grounds, for many other intellectuals remained union members, some even retaining leadership positions.[4] In October 1991 *Solidarność* fielded candidates for parliament, thus becoming a *de facto* political party. Lech Walesa, whose presidential campaign Goodwyn supported because of its anti-intellectual character, cannot qualify as a genuine populist either. While retaining his status as the living symbol of *Solidarność*, he has distanced himself from practical union affairs. Moreover, since his election to the presidency he has stolidly defended the Balcerowicz reforms for marketization and privatization (and stonewalled workers' protests against them). Does this mean that only rank and file *Solidarność* workers can be true populists? Perhaps this, too, may not fit Goodwyn's purpose well.[5]

The process of elimination, then, leaves only *Solidarność*'s enemies as candidates for the mantle of populism. The OPZZ (Official trade unions created during martial law, now competitors of *Solidarność*) have since 1989 consistently opposed government economic policy, leading strikes and protest marches (even while *Solidarność* called for labor peace). Stan Tyminski's "Party X" (formed after Tyminski's surprise showing in the presidential election) finds its support mostly among the "other Poland." Understandably, other political parties — along with *Solidarność* — condemn this sort of populism as demagogic, irresponsible, and rife with operatives of the former security services.[6]

If genuine populists are hard to identify, the New Class liberals, it would seem, should be easy. Politicians of the new regime, they are committed to Western political institutions, espousing cosmopolitan values and non-radical, constitutional methods. They come from the former intelligentsia, and many were closely associated with *Solidarność*. In "The Crisis of Liberalism in Poland," David Ost points his finger at "the veteran liberal opposition, the intellectual ideologues of the 'independent civil society' . . . Michnik, Kuron, and the old KOR milieu" for having "nothing to offer disgruntled people but respect for

4. For example, Lech Kaczynski, a lawyer from Gdansk associated with the Opposition since the 1970s, oscillated between union office (he ran for chairman in February 1991) and high-profile national politics. Curiously, Goodwyn does not discuss any positive, "organic" role for intellecutals in a populist movement. Can it be that the only function intellectuals should perform is debunking academic misrepresenters of populism such as Hofstadter and Garton Ash? Cf. Goodwyn, "Rethinking Populism" *op. cit.*

5. In April 1991 I conducted interviews at the Gdansk Shipyards. When I asked workers there (veterans of 1980 and of the 1988 strikes) what they thought of the split in *Solidarność*, they responded: "We needed to go our separate ways, but we still understand each other. If some professor in Warsaw is deprived of his rights, the Shipyards will stand up for him. And if we need his help, he'll do the same for us." Whether or not my interviewees' political judgment was realistic, they were expressing what according to Goodwyn would be a most un-populist spirit of cooperation with the New Class enemy.

6. For David Ost, the chief example of populism is the Christian National Union, one of the two major parties in the present coalition government of Jan Olszewski. This is a misunderstanding. The ChNU is a Catholic-organicist version of Christian Democracy, not populist in any recognizable sense, positive or pejorative.

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democratic rules." This "professional, New Class community of administrators," he concludes, is the antithesis of authentic community.

But this identification of "Michnik intellectuals" as the liberal core of the New Class is misleading. Influential as Michnik and his milieu were (and are), they were never all of KOR, nor all of the Opposition, nor all of the intelligentsia who participated in *Solidarność*, nor all of the intellectuals now active in national politics. They can be called "liberal" only in the broad sense of holding civil libertarian and constitutionalist values. The word itself has assumed a special meaning in today's Poland and willfully ignoring it muddles explanation. The label "liberal" came into popular currency only after 1982, used by writers in underground publications to identify themselves with *laissez faire* economics and anti-collectivist, i.e., anti-*Solidarność*, politics.[7] In the mid-1980s, a group known as the Gdansk Liberals began to make themselves heard on these issues (they later formed the Congress of Democratic Liberals — the party of former prime minister Jan Krzysztof Bielecki).

At stake in the move from *Anti-Politics* to "The Crisis" is more than terminology; it is a fundamental reversal. The desire to shift from social to political analysis is understandable, given the 1989 *Solidarność* electoral victory and the succession of *Solidarność* governments that followed. Yet the about face is unfortunate, because Ost's earlier work dug deeper into the peculiarities of Polish history and culture. Provocative formulations in *Anti-Politics* challenged both Polish Oppositionists and Western observers to take a fresh look at each others' assumptions; "The Crisis" collapses all this into peremptory presentist judgments. What in *Anti-politics* appeared as the coherence of the pre-1989 Polish opposition now becomes the "false unity of the past." Yet the indivisibility of *Solidarność* invoked by the Democratic Union during the breakup of 1990 (a unity nostalgically defended by Michnik)[8] was not so much "false" as "in the process of disintegration," logically implying that it had once been real. In the not-so-distant past *Solidarność* unity had tremendous mobilizing power, which drew its strength from the communitarian-mutualism imbedded in the old Polish *społeczeństwo*. Moreover, because the Democratic Union is a spectrum of political opinion, including Aleksander Hall's Democratic Right, there is a large grain of truth in the DU's claim that it continues the Opposition-*Solidarność* stance of representing the pre-political interests of the national community.

While Ost once credited the 1970s Opposition with inventing a novel, society-oriented strategy, in "The Crisis" he blames it for having abandoned its former pro-labor sympathies. Allegedly, after becoming convinced that "the heart of

7. Miroslaw Dzielski, a leading proponent of *laissez faire*, suggested that the black market was the purest model of a free society because it effectively escaped regulation by the state and stimulated initiative according to its own, self-generated dynamic. In comparison, *Solidarność* was a loser, hopelessly mired in old fashioned socialist thinking. Cf. Franek Michalski, "Rise of a Political Opposition in Poland, in *Poland Watch* No. 8, 1986.

8. See Janina Paradowska, "The Three Cards Game: an Interview with Adam Michnik," in *Telos* 89 (Fall 1991), pp. 95-101.

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the problem was state control as such," the Opposition became liberal. They appealed to "all who felt ignored by the Party" with the "liberal program of social self-organization" and "the liberal idea of a pluralist society of competing interests." This re-evaluation of the Opposition sets up the argument that the worker-intelligentsia alliance of 1980 was false, and that by 1989 intellectuals had dropped all pretenses of a community of interest, manipulating the language of universal value for their own particular political purposes.

John Michael is closer to the matter when he points out that modern society is un-civil, that politics is a dirty business in which the universal intellectual with his high moral tone finds himself in a quandary. Back in the days of martial law, Michnik had said he looked forward to the day when Poles could judge their politicians on the wisdom of their policies or their skill in accepting compromise. Until that day, he said, "We will judge them on how they behave in jail." In "Three Cards" he comments bitterly that such an attitude of "not treating politics as a game but as a way to defend basic values . . . [is our] own peculiar moral pathology." Michael responds, citing Zygmunt Bauman, that although changed conditions have deprived intellectuals of their legislative function, they still fill an interpretive one. They should continue to do what they do best — think and converse, leading public dialogue — but they should give up their traditional political authority.

Put another way, the present problem is how to move from the (pre-modern) old Polish social structure to modern democratic and economic institutions. The liberal strategy, to follow Lasch's definition of liberalism,[9] is based on faith in material progress and individualism, accompanied by the belief that it is possible to dispense with civic virtue. On these criteria, are the "Michnik intellectuals" liberals? They do accept the need for progress, more precisely, they hope that capitalist development will bring material improvement, if only slowly and painfully. But they do not trust economic development to work on its own without the Polish version of civic virtue, a sense of moral responsibility for the community as a whole. (Here they differ from self-described liberals, such as Jan Krzysztof Bielecki or Leszek Balcerowicz, who believe in separating decisively from the collectivist ethos of the past and who want to subordinate politics to the exigencies of development).

The distinction between "progressive individualism" and civic responsibility proves useful in testing the notion of "civil society" as it has been applied to Poland. It is important to note that the expression first appeared in Poland in the mid-1980s, an import from Hungary and the West. In Polish it translates as "civic" or even "citizenly" society. In the 1970s everyone knew what, or rather *who* society was: it was the national community. "We" were society, "they" were the state authorities, Soviet satraps. The opposition and, later, *Solidarność*, drew on historical, cultural, religious, and proletarian traditions to call this self-identified community to self-organization against state repression. The task in the 1980s,

9. See Christopher Lasch, "Liberalism and Civic Virtue," in *Telos* 88 (Summer 1991).

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after a certain amount of self-organization had taken place, was to make this society, to make "us," more citizenly. "We" had had no experience of the way democracy worked (parties, elections, necessity of compromise). Nor, apparently, had all of "us" the *will* to become involved in politics, for the ranks of engaged activists in the martial law period were thinner than underground publications claimed.

Neither the 1970s project of social self-organization, nor the 1980s call for civic responsibility was based on liberal progressive-individualism. They were two steps on the way from a pre-modern moral economy toward a more modern, more "European" polity. By 1989 self-described Liberals were demanding a break with the KOR-*Solidarność* ethos and an economistic "enrich yourselves, come what may" program; others (including "Michnik intellectuals") insisted that the old communitarianism was still necessary as the moral conscience of development, i.e., a social safety net program.

Just what made it necessary is the subject of the Tarkowskis "Civil Society or Amoral Familism?" and Marody's "On Polish Political Attitudes." Both articles undertake descriptions of the un-civil side of Polish society, the "other Poland," which had remained indifferent to the calls for social self-organization and civic responsibility. The inertia of familistic small-group structures contrasted sharply with the extroverted energy of opposition circles. Instead of struggle for social self-organization, people in the "other Poland" wanted to "change their own position within the system rather than to change the system itself" (Marody). These un-progressive individualists cannot, therefore, be considered a source of the "new populism." There is evidence that when they do express themselves politically it is to support the OPZZ, the ex-Communist Party, or Tyminski's "Party X."

On balance, then, the Polish situation seems ill-suited to a New Class vs. populism analysis. However, this discussion must be credited with placing three issues on the table for any future political study of Poland. The first has to do with the relation of morality to politics. Many intellectuals engaged in political life today uphold the tradition of civic responsibility. They share the old Polish intelligentsia's sense of mission for defending the common weal — against foreign attack as well as against internal apathy and invidious self-interest. But this Polish version of civic virtue is prone to the same fault as all other versions of, i.e., the tendency to blur the line between morality in politics and political moralism.

Secondly, Piccone's "The Emergence of Federal Populism" raises the issue of regionalism. It is an historical paradox that just as the North Atlantic system of nation-states is being shaken by the rearrangement of international economic and political alliances, as well as by local intrastate conflicts, newly sovereign East European countries are struggling to reconstitute strong centralized authority within their own borders. (The dynamic in Poland between civic responsibility for rationalizing state institutions and an amorphous, uncontrolled, shadow-economy-based "other Poland" is precisely such a struggle.) Nevertheless regionalism has begun to appear as a political and social factor in Poland. Ethnic and religious minorities and local cultures have begun to demand recognition,

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if not autonomy. German-speakers in Silesia, the divided Cieszyn/Tesin region, and the Orthodox religious community in Eastern Poland, among others, have revived some old resentments, but for the most part they have shown themselves a healthy affirmation of Poland's historic regional character.

Thirdly, a collective amnesia has set in concerning the *Solidarność* movement of 1980-81 as a model of worker-intelligentsia cooperation. Karol Modzelewski has noted that *Solidarność* was then a mass social movement capable of exercising informal but effective control over its leadership. Not by electoral procedures or recall of delegates, but by communicating in face-to-face meetings, through wildcat strikes, or other, seemingly trivial, local conflicts. When the people at the top did something that the people at the bottom did not like or did not understand, the movement became ungovernable. The difference between that and the ungovernability in evidence today lies in the difference between a social movement based on a communitarian consensus and a factional tug-of-war among political tendencies growing out of that movement. In 1980-81, it needs to be remembered, workers and intellectuals could be found at all levels of the movement, in its top and middle authority structures as well as at the grass roots, engaging in "interpretive" debate on issues that mattered. There is no such local-based forum for discussion today. There may yet come a time when the post-*Solidarność* parties and the old *Solidarność* constituency, faced with a growing destabilizing threat from "unprogressive individualism" or with the high social costs of unrestrained development might consider rejoining their forces.

Ultimately, the animosity between the workers and intellectuals of *Solidarność*, though undeniably real, may prove insignificant, when compared to the growing chasm between what they had created together and the new society rising out of the unwanted social revolution of 1989.

Andrzej W. Tymowski

Spinoza's Critical Turn

Christopher Norris, *Spinoza and the Origins of Modern Critical Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 322 pp.

The philosophical distortion and even effacement of Spinoza has been so thorough that his stature in the history of philosophy has been diminished. There is thus a need to recover the specificity of his thought, as Norris suggests in his trail-blazing if flawed book.

The Spinoza renaissance that occurred in Germany in the 1920s[1] might have

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led to a new appreciation of Spinoza had it not been cut short by the destruction of the Weimar Republic. Norris' book belongs to new efforts at a Spinoza revival. Within such a context, Yimiyahu Yovel sees Spinoza as the forerunner of the philosophy of modern experience.[2] The radical method of Spinoza's "philosophy of immanence" is said to provide the means to deal with a universe without transcendence. However dubious the attempt to root Spinoza's philosophy in his Marrano experience, Yovel rightly redirects attention to the intrinsically modern aspects of Spinoza'a thought. More concretely, Berel Lang emphasizes the "modernist current" in Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, which formulates the first theory of interpretation in the distinction between truth and meaning.[3]

Norris undertakes the task of vindicating Spinoza as a philosopher of not only historical but contemporary significance by demonstrating his relation to modern critical theory. While this relation is crucial to such an enterprise, Norris' restricted notion of critical theory is more suggestive than exhaustive, and he confines his search for evidence of this relation almost exclusively to representatives of contemporary French theory. He discusses Althusser, Balibar, Deleuze, Derrida, de Man, and Macherey, and quotes amply from the deconstructionists. But he rarely quotes from Spinoza, whose thought is filtered through this French screen. His approach is a kind of intellectual hide and seek played in the contemporary litcrit scene. No matter how many quotations *about* Spinoza he assembles, they still do not add up to an argument. He only asserts that Spinoza distinguishes between the theological and the political in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, where he proposes a theory of meaning which allows for different orders of truth. This he accomplished in his *Tractatus de intellectu emendatione*.

The critical moment in Spinoza's thought is when he distinguishes between the theological and political on the basis of his ontologically grounded metaphysical premises. Whereas Machiavelli consciously ignored the ontological and metaphysical presuppositions of human action in order to obtain a formal determination of power calculated in terms of passions and persons, and Hobbes proceeded to found political theory on a scientific metaphysics because the theological had become a sphere of "civil war," Spinoza attempted to obviate the problems presented by both alternatives. Proceeding from the assumption that a self-validating political philosophy requires a methodology of its own preconditions, he not only developed a theory of its elements, of human nature, etc., but more importantly, of how political philosophy is presented. Inherent in this approach is a limit to the theoretical use of political concepts because their

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1. Names associated with this renaissance are Carl Gebhardt, the dean of Spinoza research, who edited the first and still only complete critical edition of Spinoza's works and initiated the *Chronicon Spinozanum* and series of "Spinozana"; Jacob Freudenthal, S. von Dunin-Borkowski, and Harry Austryn Wolfsohn.

2. Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Spinoza and other Heretics*, Vol. I, *The Marrano of Reason*; Vol. II, *The Adventures of Immanence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). Cf. my review in *Modern Language Notes*, No. 106 (1991), pp. 729-731.

3. Berel Lang, *The Anatomy of Philosophical Style* (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell Publishers, 1990), Chap. 11, "The Politics of Interpretation: Spinoza's Modernist Turn."

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validity cannot be divorced from their critical function. The moment they transcend their metaphysical framework, they lose their critical potential.

The joining and separating of the theological and the political in Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* discloses a critical strategy. Political theory is grounded in metaphysics; the strategy is to confront the autonomy of the theological and the political *philosophically*, whereby philosophical enquiry is transformed into a critical project. As Fatma Haddad-Chamakh, Toni Negri and Manfred Walther have argued,[4] the metaphysical-critical project of a universal ontology formulated in Spinoza's *Ethics* can be read as political theory in disguise. Contra Machiavelli and Hobbes, Spinoza's point is not to facilitate another form of political reasoning but to define politics as a sphere of reason consistent with nature. If politics is not defined as power, passions and persons but as a realm constituted by reason alone, and this reason is synonymous with nature, then its critical potential is not only manifest in theory but applicable in practice. Viewed in this light, it becomes clear why Spinoza interrupted his work on *Ethics* to write the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. It was not simply to respond to contemporary political demands but rather to provide a philosophical ground for his political theory.

Having pointed the way to such an argument, Norris goes in a different direction. He finds in Spinoza a theory of "fiction as a determinate mode of knowledge, admittedly a partial or 'mutilated' mode, but one that has its own distinctive role to play in the process of arriving at adequate ideas" (246). This not only reads Spinoza backwards but obliterates the fact that Spinoza is not interested in reaching adequate ideas on non-philosophical grounds — the goal of theology — but rather in a rejection of all truth claims which arise from non-rational sources. It is true, as Norris indicates, that the various modes of expression first find a theoretical framework with Spinoza. But not until Kant are there elements of a narrative theory.[5] While it might be argued that Spinoza's philosophy prepared the ground for Kant's breakthrough, only with Kant does everything appear *a priori* as fiction — in need of processing through a transcendental aesthetic which, in turn, through a complicated process of reasoning, leads to the distinction of fiction as mere imagination and knowledge.[6] With Spinoza, however, fiction is still a deviant path to truth. According to Norris, Spinoza's philosophy includes a theory of interpretation, hermeneutics, and fiction in a critical practice. But it is less the standard by which any future "critical theory" is to be measured than the critical turning point in the history of philosophy.

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4. Fatma Haddad-Chamakh, *Philosophie systématique et systéme de philosophie politique chez Spinoza* (Tunis: Publications de l'Univérsité de Tunis, 1980); Toni Negri, *The Savage Anomaly: The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics* (1981), trans. by Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), cf. my review of the German edition in *Studia Philosophica*, Vol. 42 (1983), pp. 240-242; Manfred Walther, *Metaphysik als Anti-Theologie* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1971).

5. Cf. Claudia Brodsky's study of Kant, *The Imposition of Form* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

6. In regard to "transcendental aesthetics," see the chapter "Zur Form der Kritik" in Willi Goetschel, *Kant als Schriftsteller* (Vienna: Passagen Verlag, 1990).

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Spinoza's epistemological move not only takes on elements from Bacon and Descartes but transforms them into a *critical* epistemology. Husserl's observation that Spinoza's *Ethics* contains the "first universal ontology"[7] expresses the new stage metaphysics reaches in Spinoza. With Spinoza then, the very possibility of conceiving a rational universe requires a theory of knowledge. Thus Spinoza finds his place in modern philosophy between Descartes and Leibniz and in modern political theory between Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. He marks the crucial point when philosophy expands its methodology into a metaphysical-critical dimension. Norris' book rightly redirects attention to a thinker who stands at a decisive point in the history of critical thought.

Willi Goetschel

7. Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. by David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 65.

Gramsci's Prison Notebooks — *The Remake*

Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, Vol. 1, ed. by Joseph A. Buttigieg, trans. by Joseph A. Buttigieg and Antonio Callari (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 608 pp.+xxiii.

The reappearance of various ethnic identities, traditional religions and other allegedly transcended cultural traits in the former USSR testifies to a failure much more profound than even the most hostile Western Sovietologists ever suspected. The most surprising discovery in what is left of the old Soviet Union has not been its appalling economic disorganization and irrationality but the extent to which "really existing socialism" has failed to generate anything even reminiscent of the promised utopian "New Man." If human nature is a function of social relations, then the new order should have generated a new "higher" type of personality reflecting these internalized new relations. Something of the kind has actually happened, but not as originally projected. What was actually internalized was a clientilistic ethos reflecting the objective social relations obtaining between the central bureaucracy and its wards.

While this turn of events has discredited most Marxist ideologies that managed to survive over the years, it is being interpreted as a vindication of

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Gramsci's analyses of cultural hegemony and the dynamics of the revolutionary process, and therefore as a relegitimation of Gramscian versions of Marxism-Leninism. Gramsci emphasized the extent to which a cultural revolution must precede its social and political counterpart in order for the latter to succeed. Although his faith in Leninism was predicated on the premise that the very existence of the Leninist party as "a group, relatively small but still of significant size, let us say several thousand strong, that is socially and ideologically homogeneous" demonstrated the objectivity of the revolutionary situation, i.e., "a widespread state of affairs and corresponding state of mind which only mechanical external and hence transitory causes prevent from being expressed,"[1] he also assumed that this predicament would precipitate qualitative social changes only *after* this group had succeeded in carrying out a cultural revolution generalizing its worldview among the majority of the population. From this viewpoint, whatever perverse cultural revolution did take place in the former USSR can be interpreted as the result of coercive or "administrative" measures rather than the organic internalization of a new worldview. In strictly Gramscian terms, the Soviet experiment can be seen as another "abstract negation" or a "passive revolution" reminiscent of the disastrous 1789 Neapolitan uprising (to which Gramsci often refers), whose failure to meet the cultural preconditions for a successful revolution ultimately doomed it. Once again, the day can be saved by the old communist ploy whereby the "imperfection" or failure of particular collectivist projects are readily acknowledged, but only in order to relegitimate a "correct" Marxist-Leninist theory.

In addition to explaining away the Soviet failure as an aberration resulting from backwardness, theoretical deviations, bourgeois conspiracies, etc., this Gramscian approach is particularly attractive for those few remaining American Marxists safely entrenched in their ivory towers — especially literary critics — whose career-driven esoteric "discourses" and reinterpretations of obscure texts bear no clear relation to anything but academic politics. Redefined as part of a broad, undifferentiated "cultural revolution," any reinterpretation of Melville, Shakespeare or even Walt Disney can pass as political practice, thus bestowing transcendental meaning to otherwise idle academic speculations. This explains why, at a time when Marxist texts are being remaindered everywhere, interest in Gramsci has not abated. His most important intellectual legacy, the *Prison Notebooks*, written in the late 1920s and early 1930s, are now being translated and published in English from the definitive, exceptionally well annotated and scholarly Italian edition put together by Valentino Gerratana in 1975.[2]

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1. Gramsci poses this as a question, but given his account of the relation between subjective and objective conditions, his answer is clearly that the very existence of such a party is evidence of the maturity of revolutionary conditions. See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), p. 114.

2. Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del Carcere*, ed. by Valentino Gerratana (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), 4 Volumes. The first partial English translation, by Louis Mark, appeared in 1957

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Planned to appear in five hefty volumes, the first is now available. It contains the first two notebooks (out of a total of 29) supplemented by all the relevant documentation, including extensive physical descriptions of the original notebooks (15 by 20.5 cm), an elegant glossy 14 page portfolio with photos of Gramsci, his sister-in-law, some sample pages of the manuscript, his fingerprints — even one of the prison buildings in which these notebooks were written. If and when a definitive edition of the the *Dead Sea Scrolls* will be made available, it cannot possibly be more thorough. In terms of accuracy, availability, documentation, cross-references, etc., Gramsci's work is joining the ranks of the Marx-Engels *Gesamtausgabe*, Lenin's, Stalin's, Mao's or even Hoxa's *Collected Works* as definitive sacred texts meant to prevent any possible misreadings or ambiguities. Unfortunately, it is also very likely that they will be even less politically relevant and useful than the latter were in the former Soviet Bloc, where these texts at least had a legitimating function for the ruling bureaucratic elite. In the West it will take a lot more than a new edition of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* to relegitimate either the remnants of the Italian Communist Party or the politics of a few American literary critics still entertaining Marxist-Leninist fantasies.

Gramsci himself would probably have been horrified had he known, shortly before his death on April 27, 1937, that forty-five years later his fragmentary notebooks would be published in the US exactly as they were written, but *after* the Soviet Union had collapsed and the Communist Party he helped to found had become so ashamed of its history and outlooks that it had changed its name in the futile effort to relegitimate itself as a *bona fide* social-democratic party. Most of all, however, he would have been crushed to read that his "most important contribution to the elaboration of an anti-dogmatic" Marxism had been "the theory and practice of philological criticism found in [his] notebooks" (p. 64). Politically dead everywhere, his "theory of praxis" would live on the margins of literary criticism in the arcane debates among *fin de siècle* English professors and multicultural ideologists to buttress questionable politics but thriving academic careers.

Worse yet, this publishing venture risks to fall in line with the infamous "Stalinist school of historical falsification" in that the long, repetitive and largely irrelevant "Introduction" fails to mention any possible friction between Gramsci's thought and the way Palmiro Togliatti flattened and instrumentalized it after WWII to underpin the policies of the Italian Communist Party;[3] how this distorted reading of Gramsci was readily accepted throughout the 1950s and thus retarded a critical evaluation of his ideas at least until the 1960s when serious differences between Gramsci's ideas and Togliatti's policies began to be noticed, or how Gramsci's own "absolute historicism" rules out the

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as Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince* (New York: International Publishers, 1957) 1957). The second, much more extensive one, was published in 1971. Cf. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, *op. cit.*

3. For a discussion of the Gramsci-Togliatti relation, see my "Gramsci's Marxism: Beyond Lenin and Togliatti," in *Theory and Society*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Winter 1976), pp. 485-512.

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uncritical transposition of historically specific ideas addressing particular political questions. Had Gramsci's most important Marxist legacy boiled down to his contribution to "the theory and practice of philological criticism," not only would his work never have been translated into any language but he would long since have been forgotten along with armies of other irrelevant literary critics.[4] Consequently, there should be no doubt as to the political objectives of this new translation: it is part of a desperate attempt to re-legitimate a culturally acceptable version of Marxism-Leninism for post-communist consumption. In the most charitable interpretation, this business about Gramsci's most important Marxist contribution boiling down to his "theory and practice of philological criticism" can at best be seen as part of a smokescreen originally meant to persuade the relatively naive directors of Columbia University Press — a private "bourgeois" institution presumably uninterested in sponsoring questionable political projects — into sinking considerable resources in the desperate attempt to resurrect a new version of Marxism-Leninism, and subsequently to market it as a legitimate litcrit subdiscipline.

Had the editor/translator been more honest in his introduction, he would have elaborated his acknowledgment that the original (1948-1951) Felice Platone edition of the *Prison Notebooks*, organized thematically and constituting the basis for the somewhat more limited and occasionally misleading Hoare-Smith 1971 English translation, turned out to be not only rather accurate but on the whole a skilful editing job in assembling Gramsci's scattered notes into six discrete volumes. The American editor emphasizes that the critics of this edition had particular axes to grind in challenging its accuracy on the basis of no concrete evidence (they had no access to the original manuscripts). What he forgets to add is that this edition appeared during the darkest hours of Stalinism and Zhdanovism, when cultural instrumentalization and distortion was official communist policy. Who could possibly trust communist "editors" after the Moscow trials in the 1930s and the systematic rewriting of history undertaken at that time?

This "oversight" leads the editor to overlook further the fact that, except for the massive documentation provided by Gerratana in the 1975 critical edition, which sheds considerable light on Gramsci's sources, this unabridged and unedited version of the *Prison Notebooks* has contributed *absolutely nothing* to what was already known about Gramsci's thought. Its function was to exonerate the original party editors and contribute to launching Berlinguer's ultimately unsuccessful Eurocommunist version of the Italian Communist Party in the early 1970s, at the time of the "historical compromise" and following the repression of Allende's socialist experiment in Chile. To the extent that the fate of the Italian Communist Party was inextricably connected with the fortunes of

4. Although in a letter dated March 19, 1927 to his sister-in-law Gramsci expressed "regret" that he never followed his teacher Matteo Bartoli's advice to write a critique of the "neogrammarians," he refused to have anything to do with literary critics and this "refusal to write literary criticism is a logical consequence of his theory of praxis." Cf. Arshi Pipa, "Gramsci' as a (Non)-Literary Critic," in *Telos* 57 (Fall 1983), p. 88.

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the Soviet model, the operation failed *politically*[5] but succeeded *culturally* in providing scores of academics — almost exclusively abroad, since in Italy the fate of Gramsci's work had become inextricably bound with official communist politics so that all Gramsci discussions tended to end up as either defenses or attacks on the Party — with pretexts to write long-winded exegeses and interpretations of the *Notebooks* as the bases for yet more "new and improved" versions of Marxism-Leninism. During the past two decades scores of Gramsci commentaries in French, Spanish, German and English have filled library shelfs to reassure residual academic Marxists in Western and Third World universities (the only Marxists left anywhere) with the equivalent of the popular Italian communist saying of the 1940s and 1950s "*a da veni Baffo!*" (roughly: "the man with the big mustache [Stalin] is coming!"), i.e., a defiant call to keep the faith in the face of growing adversities and setbacks.

While the track-record of Stalinism, the geopolitical context and the not-so-hidden agenda of the Italian Communist Party explains the effort and expense in preparing the critical edition of the *Prison Notebooks* in 1975, what explains its *complete* translation in English in 1992? A lot of the notes are totally irrelevant, since they only list material that Gramsci had just read or his passing comments on marginal issues never subsequently re-examined, while some more substantial ones are often copied *verbatim* and elaborated in more details in later notebooks. Unwittingly, the editor himself documents this predicament when he wastes over 15 pages reconstructing the utterly irrelevant meaning of one such note, as an example of the kind of work sympathetic literary critics unfamiliar with the Italian language can now undertake. Presumably this paves the way for score of articles in litcrit journals interpreting and elaborating "what Gramsci really meant" in this or that note, in the same way the Marxology of years past "analyzed" every possibly ambiguous passage in Marx or Lenin's *oeuvre*.

Non-specialists interested in Gramsci and wanting to read what he wrote on, e.g., intellectuals, civil society, Croce, Macchiavelli, Bukharin, etc., cannot be expected to wade through this new pristine translation of the notebooks and painfully reconstruct the various fragments on the subject into a coherent argument. It is much easier to consult either Platone's original six volumes or the Hoare-Smith translation, where these writings are thematically collected. What is thereby lost in terms of nuances, details and references is negligible for the overwhelming majority of readers not interested in painstaking scholastic inquiries into Gramsci's "deeeper" meanings, presumably accessible only through an exhaustive mining of every minor reference in the *Prison Notebooks*. Those who are would most likely be specialized scholars able to read the originals in Italian.

There remains the question of the "actuality" of Gramsci in the age of "post-communism." Is it in any way a matter of a great thinker whose ideas have something to contribute to contemporary thought? Within a Gramscian framework

5. Actually the Eurocommunist strategy almost succeeded. What thwarted it was not so much the Italian Communist Party's Stalinist heritage but the Red Brigades' and the rest of the Extreme Left's terrorist campaign culminating in the Aldo Moro assassination.

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this question is illegitimate. Although in an often-quoted letter to his sister-in-law he indicated an interest in writing something "*für ewig*," such a statement has to be understood within a Gramscian *dialectical* framework.[6] What distinguishes Gramsci from the rest of his generation of Hegelian Marxists was his "absolute historicism," the cornerstone of his "philosophy of praxis," whereby ideas cannot be divorced from their concrete socio-historical context. Every new situation necessitates re-grounding analyses according to particular socio-historical conditions and shifting political criteria. This is why even what has been recycled as his most explosive ideas — the theory of hegemony, organic intellectuals, civil society, etc. — on closer analysis turn out to be politically obsolete, theoretically untenable and historically questionable.

Consider Gramsci's theory of hegemony. Outlined before the advent of the "culture industry" — and Adorno-Horkheimer's devastating analysis of its impact on the development of revolutionary consciousness — Gramsci's speculations about a "war of position" allegedly leading to the achievement of cultural hegemony and thus the creation of the necessary cultural preconditions for a revolutionary social transformation appear today as relevant as DC current for the development of modern electronics. Party intellectuals, presumably of working class origin (organic as opposed to traditional intellectuals), were to universalize workers' needs and aspirations in terms of a theoretical framework — Marxism — conducive to a qualitative alteration of predominant social relations. This process, however, was to take place through a mode of communication — direct contact, public forums, newspapers, pamphlets, etc. — which had already become secondary by the early 1930s with the advent of radio. The very form of the new modes of communication, independent of any content, implied isolation, passivity and a kind of permanent sub-individuality conducive to mass manipulation by powerful centralized bureaucracies. Henceforth hegemony in the Gramscian sense would have to be orchestrated primarily through the airwaves. Even in the rare cases when the revolutionary

6. This is the same question concerning Marx's account of the transhistorical character of art. For an interesting discussion of this issue, see Michael McKeon, "The Origins of Aesthetic Value," in *Telos* 57 (Fall 1983), pp. 63-82, where the lasting value of art is seen as a function of the ever-changing relation between the subject and the art-work in producing unique experiences. If Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* are treated in this fashion, all that can be salvaged are either historically-specific political interventions or general methodological considerations hardly reducible to a "theory and practice of philological criticism." Gramsci always approached what he studied *politically*, from the perspective of the particular questions he sought to answer and in terms of an axiological framework — what he understood as Marxism. Whatever methodological considerations can be abstracted from his concrete analyses turn out to be essentially general guidelines for critical thinking which have been spelled out more formally and systematically by, e.g., Edmund Husserl's eidetic and transcendental reductions. While these considerations are intrinsically valuable, they will hardly contribute to relegitimating any kind of Marxism-Leninism (the axiological framework) — something that Gramsci himself began to doubt and which helps explain why in the very last years of his life he stopped writing on immediate political issues.

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opposition could have access to the media, its "spiritual" message could never compete effectively with its consumerist counterpart more suitable for the new alienated personality constituted by the social relations of advanced capitalism.

Unlike most of his communist comrades who saw it simply as a mere superstructural excrescence, Gramsci always privileged culture. He remained an Enlightenment thinker for whom even the highest human longings for universality ultimately entailed, as their necessary underside, the obliteration of that particularity and specificity constituting human identities. His culture-centered alternative formulation of Marxism-Leninism also ends up postulating that arbitrary and abstract Enlightenment homogenization which turned out to be the Achilles' heel of "really existing socialism." When all is said and done, cultural hegemony presupposes the primacy of mythical entities such as the "class," in whose interests the new culture is deployed in order to achieve a higher rational form of humanity. No matter how positively this humanity is depicted, it inevitably turns out to be a kind of egalitarian night in which all proletarian or post-proletarian cows are black. In the age of multiculturalism and the resurgence of ethnic identities as irrational spontaneous reactions to bureaucratically-imposed homogenization, this ideal is not likely to find widespread reception. If it did, it would suffer from all the shortcomings typical of liberalism, whose universality can be achieved only at the cost of axiological vacuity and consequently tends to self-destruction.[7]

Roughly the same can be said of other key Gramscian notions such as civil society — a domain long since thoroughly penetrated by the state — or his reconstruction of Italian history to explain the rise of fascism. Even his brilliant philosophical critique of Croce and Bukharin deploys an elaborate hyper-historicized dialectic which relativizes all experiences to inescapable historical prisons able to inform only concerning their particularity, unable to guide the present other than as part of a much broader new mediational constellation. No longer embroiled in the fate of a political project which, after inestimable damage, has finally ended in the begging of the former workers' state for readmission to the "bourgeois" world, Gramsci's work can now finally be evaluated dispassionately as that of one of the most brilliant intellectuals of his generation, murdered by fascism precisely because of his threatening power of mind. Unfortunately, this new translation, accurate and scholarly as it may be, is not likely to contribute to any long overdue *requiem* for Gramsci. Rather, it seems fated to become more intellectual formaldehyde for a theoretical cadaver still solidly entombed in an American intellectual mausoleum.

Paul Piccone

7. See my "The Crisis of Liberalism and the Emergence of Federal Populism," in *Telos* 89 (Fall 1991), pp. 7-44.

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Populism vs. Neoconservatism

José Mardones, *Capitalismo y Religión: La Religión Politica Neoconservadora* (Santander: Sal Terrae, 1991).
Michael P. Federici, *The Challenge of Populism: The Rise of Right-Wing Democratism in Postwar America* (New York: Praeger, 1991).

Though the two books being reviewed are written from widely divergent positions, one from a Catholic-liberationist-Habermasian and the other from an American Old Rightist perspective, they do share one characteristic. Both seem curiously out of touch with current social and political realities.[1]

Slogging through the works of Irving Kristol, Peter L. Berger, Daniel Bell, R. J. Neuhaus, Norman Podhoretz, and Michael Novak, Mardones both praises and blames the neoconservatives for producing a neo-Weberian defense and critique of capitalist society. He credits them with rediscovering the cultural contradictions of bourgeois society, particularly the tension between an impersonal economic system (and a crassly utilitarian culture) and the human quest for spiritual and esthetic satisfaction. Allegedly, although the neocons have analyzed this contradiction, their commitment to capitalism has forced them to justify it as the price of human progress. All they can offer by way of remedy is the hope of intermediate social institutions serving as a cushion between the solitary individual and a dehumanizing productive system.

Mardones associates neocon programs with the same project Lukács ascribed to the elder Hegel (in *The Philosophy of Right*). Thus, he recasts Novak, Berger, and Kristol as exponents of "mediation." Accordingly, the neocons seek to establish some social distance between the individual and a heartless capitalist economy. But, alas, the neocons have no more of Hegel's penetrating intelligence than Mardones has Lukács' philosophical skills. Most importantly, the neocons are not 19th century constitutionalists nor born-again defenders of bourgeois civilization. The "democratic capitalism" they seek to export should not be confused with free-market economies, the rule of legality, or other vestiges of "bourgeois ideology."[2]

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1. In his treatment of American neoconservatism, Mardones seems to rely heavily on my own studies, *The Conservative Movement* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988), which I coauthored with Thomas Fleming. Yet it is impossible to recognize our research anywhere in his work. Contrary to our attempts to get behind neoconservative rhetoric, Mardones takes it at face value.

2. When Michael Novak, the foremost exponent of democratic capitalism, was asked about the difference between his political model and social democracy, he pointed to "their tremendous overlap." Cf. his own newsletter, *Religion and Liberty* (January 1991).

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For Novak, Charles Krauthammer, and other neocons, democratic socialism and democratic capitalism are interchangeable terms for a mixed economy that, with other arrangements, fits well within a largely post-bourgeois world. Those other arrangements include multinational corporations, a non-interventionist foreign policy, support for Israeli West Bank settlements (as a beachhead for global democracy, according to an interview with black neocon Allan Keyes), and interlocking managerial states informed by the same global "human rights" imperatives. While some neocons such as Kristol and Novak identify democracy with "welfare state capitalism," other equally certifiable ones, clustered around the National Endowment for Democracy, campaign for international trade unionism.[3]

Mardones also makes the mistake of uncritically accepting Habermas' judgment about the shortcomings of neoconservatism. Though Habermas confounds American neocons with other supposed defenders of the *status quo*, he offers the conventional flattering opinions about Mardones' subjects. Those opinions, however, are both superficial and derivative from the neocons' public self-image. The last thing neocons should be mistaken for are naive, well-meaning cultural determinists. They do not believe in the primacy of culture or that social and political questions can be reduced to moral and philosophical ones. Their major interest has been the accumulation of power, through the cultivation of political officials and through the staffing of publications, like *U.S. News and World Report*, of bureaucracies, like the Department of Education and the NEH, and of anything else that brings money, patronage, and visibility. Most of the books neocons have sponsored have been media events, like Fukuyama's restatement of "the end of ideology" thesis (which Mardones treats as serious thought), calculated to influence political conduct and public policy debates. The largest neocon thinktank, Heritage, has long boasted of its avoidance of cultural issues and its straight policy-orientation. Almost all cultural activities

3. Surprisingly, the major neocon philanthropic foundations — John M. Olin, Harry and Lynde Bradley, and Sarah Scaife — give generously to social democrats as well as to the seeming classic liberals in their movement. For Scaife in particular, but also for other neocon philanthropies, agreement on foreign policy counts far more than capitalist economic principles. And even the neocon devotion to free trade, which sympathetic leftist commentators Daniel Lazare, John Judis, and Jacob Weisberg confuse with free market doctrines, is not indicative of 19th century classic liberalism. Neocons have *never* advocated economic arrangements by which individuals and companies could trade across national borders without governmental interference. Their notion of free trade is a series of brokered deals made by the US government with other countries, often for the purpose of encouraging "democratic" developments abroad. Neocon "free trade" is pan-interventionism by another name, though of a kind that has brought Chase Manhattan, Lily, and other corporate interests (through the organizational efforts of international investor William H. Simon) into the neocon philanthropic network. The speechifying by Richard Nixon in March 1992 on behalf of foreign aid and paying more money into IMF was made possible through mega-grants supplied by the Olin Foundation under William Simon.

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sponsored by the four largest neocon philanthropic foundations, dispensing over $30 million annually, have gone to agitprop magazines (with "democratic" or "global democratic" in their titles) or to friends trying to live well.[4]

Equally problematic is Federici's book on right-wing populism. To his credit, Federici is more accurate than Mardones, particularly on the probable attitudes of Hamilton and other American founding fathers concerning plebiscitary regimes. Given their explicit, repeated attempts to filter the will through constitutional means and Hamilton's expressed distaste for the populace, it is doubtful that the authors of the *Federalist* papers thought of themselves as populists.[5] What cannot be answered as definitively as Federici suggests is that Washington, Hamilton, and Madison would still reject populism in the 1990s. It is hard to believe that America's founders would still recognize their work and society in the vastly changed America of the late 20th century. Nor is there reason to assume, anachronistically, that "Jeffersonian democratism" made a dramatic return in the tax propositions of the 1970s and 1980s or in other referenda that seek to achieve policy changes independently of elected representatives. Federici knows that there are no longer any self-governing communities, that almost all governing today comes from unelected administrators, that the two political parties control access to elected office, and that those who hold such office make only intermittent attempts to govern and are cowed in any case by the national media.

There is no longer any kind of system of dual federalism. Instead what obtains is a nationalized franchise and a national bureaucracy, under no clear control of any one branch of the federal government, exercising authority at the state and municipal as well as federal levels. This outgrowth of Woodrow Wilson's democratic national state, today allied with a multinational economy, the therapeutic professions, and a swelling army of "rights" advocates, is in no sense the constitutional republic Federici praises. This anti-state also works against republican citizenship and self-government, and it is significant that the "respectable" Right, the one legitimated in *The New York Times* and *The*

4. Samuel T. Francis has defined the neocon cultural mission as the cobbling together of a hegemonic ideology for the global managerial class. My survey of the funds distributed by Bradley, Olin, Smith-Richardson, and Scaife over the last seven years for cultural and educational purposes indicates nothing as rational or as diabolical as Francis suggests. Most of these designated funds have gone to paying for trips, meals, diggings, and chandeliers for exalted celebrities such as Allan Bloom who, between 1986 and 1989, received from Olin over $3 million in mostly unrestricted gifts.

5. The eminent constitutional scholar and right-wing populist George Carey has taken the opposite position. As a frequent reader of the original Constitution and of its authors' arguments, I must concur with Federici on the anti-populist attitudes of the founders. And though Federici does not always do justice to the theoretical complexity of Rousseau on the "general will," he is correct that the Constitution's framers rejected the Rousseauistic (and Hobbesian) emphasis on undivided sovereignty as the mark of sound government. Dual federalism and constitutional checks and balances were integral to the American republican polity as created in 1787.

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Washington Post, surpasses the Left in opposing any effective attempt to control immigration into the US.

Though Federici does not distinguish enough between them, there are two forms of "plebiscitary democracy," one that serves to reinforce managerial tyranny and another that can help re-empower families and communities now stripped of self-government. The first has nothing to do with populism.[6] It involves rituals through which the managerial class seeks to show it enjoys public approval: e.g., encouraging people to vote in increasingly meaningless elections or having people profess that the present government and its policies represent their choices and best interests.

Right-wing Populists, whom Federici unfairly attacks, do not respect the legalistic façade behind which managerial welfare states both function and grow. Populists do not deprecate the state as such. They only demand that it does that for which government was created: in Hobbes' phrase, provide "protection in return for obedience." Almost all contemporary right-wing populists, Frank Rizzo being the best illustration, speak of "taking back the streets" for families, neighborhoods, and communities. Such a task is impossible for a managerial welfare regime, which exists for other purposes: i.e., to supply social workers with jobs, global democrats with foreign missionizing opportunities and Chase Manhattan with risk-free investments at the expense of American taxpayers. The present regime has made itself even more contemptible by creating a patronage network for two largely indistinguishable parties (the Founding Fathers, by the way, had no use for organized political parties) and by dividing its "multicultural" population into victims and victimizers, each with different sensitivity training.

Against this degenerate state, whose managers cling to both electoral charades and an increasingly fictional constitutional grounding, populists raise the plebiscitary democratic banner. Those people still incorporated into neighborhoods and communities insist on being re-empowered. It is they, not bureaucrats, representatives of the Republican National Committee, or anti-discrimination human rights mavens, who wish to take back control of their lives and to constitute a real state that protects rather than "sensitizes" citizens.

Contrary to Federici's assertions, this populism is a means toward an end, but not a philosophy based on worship of the popular will. Populists do not deify the people (it is not they but Podhoretz who describes himself as a "democratic idolater"). Rather, they object to having citizens degraded into slaves, forced to pay for and be controlled by an unresponsive and bureaucratically insulated government that claims dishonestly to rule for and through the people. Federici may also be overly impressed by the pseudo-Toryism of Peter Viereck and George Will. The social elites which these and other Tory Democrats seek to protect against the unwashed masses are the decrepit

6. For a critique of this kind of "plebiscitary democracy," see Claes Ryn (Federici's teacher), *The New Jacobins* (Washington: The New Humanities Press, 1991).

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remnants of the Eastern establishment, synecdochesized for Viereck in the "squire of Hyde Park," and the present managerial order, traced inaccurately by Will to Disraeli and Bismarck.

Populism, however, does have limitations — even as a tactic of resistance — and Federici does a service by pointing out at least one of them. As a demand for immediate action and as a vent for righteous indignation it does not always find adequate organizational expression. McCarthyism did have populist roots and expressed legitimate opposition to what was still then a recognizable Eastern liberal establishment (as opposed to the present managerial cancer). But this opposition found a bizarre vehicle in a drunken lout who disgraced himself on television and whose dubious achievements including launching the literary careers of both his mediocre opponents and his defender, William F. Buckley. Right-wing populism may send a "message" and may drive the priesthood of the managerial class at *The New York Times* and *The New Republic* into sputtering rage. But can they bring about a nation of self-governing and internally autonomous communities? This remains to be seen.

Another populist limitation, which Federici does not discuss, is the traditionalist social base upon which it arises. Smalltown Southern Protestants and urban (mostly Italian and Slavic) Catholics have been the groups involved in the post-1945 populist rebellions Federici studied. Tax propositions do not best illustrate these manifestations, inasmuch as they involve temporary single issues and appeal to greed as well as disgust with politics as usual. These propositions have nothing to do with the protection of neighborhoods and rooted communities, which has provided the longest-lasting post-war populist theme, from George Wallace and Louise Mae Hicks to Frank Rizzo and Patrick J. Buchanan.

But such an organizational base will only be available to populists as long as Italian, Irish, and Polish Catholic neighborhoods are left intact. Yuppies, for example, are not likely to become populists because they lack the inherited social world out of which the present populist revolt is coming. What young singles, open-marriage couples, and other uprooted types are more likely to become are cogs in the global managerial order: i.e., human-rights spokespersons, social psychologists, service professionals, or just isolated profit-seekers cut off from organic human ties. It is not around neighborhoods but increasingly around these groups, and around the underclass, as an intended object of therapy and managerial control, that present American party politics is being structured. (Centralized inner cities and suburbs full of transients are not the same as neighborhoods.) And though right-wing populists can still wreck havoc, this may not be the case for long. The social clock may already be running out on the populist enemies of politics as usual.

Paul Gottfried

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The Uses of Race

David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991), 191 pp.

To the extent that they have not been embedded within a broad cultural context, discussions concerning race in the US have been unsatisfactory. While James Baldwin could argue that racism was inherent to American culture, it remained unclear how racial ideology had become so crucial.[1] Racism is regularly invoked to explain various types of behavior, but too much is taken for granted. The concept of race tends to be naturalized, thus occluding the fact that the meaning of "blackness" and "whiteness" need to be understood in terms of social history.

W.E.B. DuBois first discussed race as an inextricable feature of American society in his *Black Reconstruction in America*. This study, however, failed to show just how racism became an integral feature of society and of the labor movement. For DuBois racism retarded rather than fostered development. From a Marxist perspective, he lamented the effects of racism on the American working class and argued that, had racism not been so virulent, industrialization of the US might have "raised the proletariat to dominance. . . ."[2]

DuBois saw the American workers' inability to develop an adequate class consciousness as the tragic outcome of fear of competition from Blacks.[3] Thus, the class solidarity that might have resulted from industrialization was aborted by a fear culminating in racism. This explanation, however, was inadequate. If, e.g., 19th century Irish immigrants behaved in racist fashion toward Blacks primarily out of concern for competition, it made no sense for them to rally to a political party that supported further immigration from Europe. In short, their support for the Democratic party only worsened competition for jobs. DuBois seems to have been aware of the inadequacy of the scarcity/competition explanation for racism. Thus *Black Reconstruction in America* contains hints for alternative explanations. The most well known is the notion that racism provided white workers with "a sort ot public and psychological wage" that permitted them to feel superior to Black workers.[4] This, however, begged the question as to why white workers would have a need to feel better.

1. James Baldwin, *Nobody Knows My Name* (New York: Laurel Books, 1960). Of paricular interest is the essay. "The Discovery of What it Means to be an American."
2. W. E. B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America* (New York: Meridian, 1962), p. 238.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 700-701.

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Unfortunately, DuBois was unable to elaborate convincingly the relation of unconscious motivation to racism.[5] Thus, given the inadequacy of the scarcity/competition explanation and the incompleteness of the alternatives he was trying to develop, DuBois' invocation of racism to explain American development seems to come out of the blue.[6]

Although since DuBois the significance of the Reconstruction era has been recognized, his emphasis on the relation of race and labor has been lost.[7] In *The Wages of Whiteness* Roediger synthesizes recent scholarship to show how the formation of the working class and the development of racial identity accompanied the emergence of industrialism in America: race and racism were central in the very emergence of the working class. Thus he refuses to take "whiteness" for granted: white identity had to be constructed. This, means that workers were responsible for what they became. Roediger rejects any attempt to portray workers as innocent pawns of ruling class manipulation: "[Most Marxist scholars) . . . have tended to concentrate on the ruling class role in perpetuating racial oppression, and to cast white workers as dupes . . ." (p. 9) whereas "white workers could and did define and accept their class positions by fashioning identities as 'not slaves' and 'not Blacks" (p. 13). Following Gutman, Roediger argues that "whiteness" was the workers' response to fears of dependency within a society dominated by the capitalist discipline.

By focusing on workers' concerns, thoughts and anxieties between 1800 and 1865, the author reconstructs how labor in America made racism part of its very being. Here Roediger relies on contemporary psychoanalysis.[8] Before

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5. The most remarkable chapter of DuBois' study is the "Transubstantiation of A Poor White," where President Andrew Johnson is referred to as " the most pitiful figure of American history." What made him so pitiful was that Johnson, a life-long champion of poor workers and an opponent of oligarchy, suddenly changed after the Civil War to become a staunch opponent of Radical Reconstruction. DuBois suggested that Johnson's turn was a result of unconscious motivations. *Ibid.*, p. 322.

6. DuBois apparently was unfamiliar with psychoanalytic approaches. Although Reich's work appeared a few years prior to his own, he does not seem to have been familiar with it. See Reich's *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1970).

7. In 1966, Barrington Moore argued that the failure of Radical Reconstruction permitted the emergence of the "classic conservative coalition" of agrarian "Junkers" and Northern industrialists. Moore's concept of a "classic conservative coalition" was, however, too abstract to capture the peculiarity of the American society after Reconstruction. More concrete is van den Berghe's characterization of the US as a *herrenvolk democracy*. Furthermore, Moore underemphasized race in accounting for later social development and thus overemphasized the positive effects of the Civil War for the labor movement. As DuBois had suggested, labor could have become more progressive had it not become so racially conscious and supportive of *herrenvolk democracy*. Cf. Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Beacon Press, 1966), pp. 147-149; and Pierre van den Berghe, *Race and Racism. A Comparative Perspective* (New York: John Wiley, 1978), p. 29.

8. Roediger mentions various sources but ultimately relies primarily on Kovel's work. See Joel Kovel, *White Racism. A Psychohistory* (New York: Pantheon. 1970).

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the 19th century, slavery and concerns about race could not cleanly bifurcate the workers' consciousness for the simple reason that "the many gradations of unfreedom among whites made it difficult to draw fast lines between any idealized free white worker and a pitied or scorned servile Black worker. Indentured servitude, impressment, apprenticeship, convict labor, farm tenancy . . . made for a continuum of oppression among whites" (p. 25).

The coming into being of the US buttressed a value system which emphasized personal independence while excoriating its opposite — weakness and servility. Industrial growth affected workers in several ways. It convinced them that they were not as free as they thought or hoped to be, and that their dependence was permanent rather than transitory. One way to confront this reality, which Roediger claims was the predominant response, was denial. Accordingly, ". . . the white working class, disciplined and made anxtious by fear of dependency, began during its formation to construct an image of the Black population as 'Other' — as embodying the preindustrial, erotic, careless style of life the white worker hated and longed for. . ." (p. 14). This process of denial, repression, anxiety and projection by white workers meant that Black enslavement was a wholly deserved state of affairs. In short, white workers could believe that mobility was always possible since they did not suffer the defects typical of Blacks.

Roediger goes on to show how Irish immigrants came to be accepted as "whites" — a status which they did not have when they arrived in the US — and how the struggle for "whiteness" translated into attacks against Blacks. This anti-Black animus emerged despite the fact that people of color were not competitors for the same jobs sought by the Irish. Ultimately, "whiteness" was the means employed by the Irish for defusing the ugly nativistic responses to immigration (pp. 137-56).

The Irish strategy for gaining acceptance as well as resolving their own anxieties — evidence for the social construction of race — worked well into the 20th century and was used by other immigrants. According to Roediger, "the tactic of questioning the suitability of newcomers on racial grounds extended to the labor movement's reception (and opposition to) the Southern and Eastern European immigrants . . . The sad drama of immigrants embracing whiteness while facing the threat of being victimized as nonwhite would have many sequels . . ." (p. 180).

Closing on this point, Roediger reveals a basic deficiency in an otherwise interesting and useful analysis. He simply does not make a clear distinction between the symbolic and psychic functions of working class racism (the cultural level), and overt racist behaviors (the social-interactive level). This distinction is too important to be neglected. When it is unrecognized, "racism" becomes an ideological label which may be applied to virtually any type of behavior. While many white workers likely derived psychic or emotional benefits from racism, it was not necessarily the case that they behaved as racists.

When, in Roediger's account, the Irish drove blacks from jobs on the docks and piers, anti-black racist action was evident. Similarly, when southern, white

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labor unionists drove black craftsmen out and prevented them from practicing their trades, racism was manifest.[9] For the most part, however, southern and eastern European immigrants to America in the 20th century did not drive blacks from jobs. Rather, for strategic and tactical reasons employers excluded blacks from employment and assigned jobs on the basis of nationality.[10] When industries were subsequently unionized, the continued exclusion of blacks was less a consequence of overt immigrant racist behavior than a traditional "passing down" of jobs to family members.[11]

This means that Roediger's notion that 20th century immigrants embraced the "Irish Strategy" of whiteness is wrong. In brief, for them becoming white was a more protracted and mediated process which involved, among other things, the abandonment of radical social and political ideas as well as an accommodation to capitalist work relations. The role played by middle class elements within immigrant communities was crucial to this transformation.[12] Ultimately, the immigrants became "white" (and thereby enjoyed a psychic benefit from racism) once they employed anti-black stereotypes to buttress their hopes that they would be able to realize "the American Dream."

The implications of Roediger's book are unsettling. If he is right that American identity is dependent on whiteness, the place of people of color in the US is destined to remain a subordinate one. Furthermore, an obsession with color prevents an alternative politics from developing.

John DeBrizzi

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9. Philip Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker* (New York: International Publishers), pp. 124-25.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 127. For a case study of labor practices, see DeBrizzi, "The Standard Oil Strikes in Bayonne, New Jersey, 1915-1916," in *New Jersey History*, No. 101 (1983).

11. This, of course, still occurs today. Family connections are more important than race in obtaining a union card and a job.

12. See John Bukowczyk, "The Transformation of Working-Class Ethnicity: Corporate Control, Americanization, and the Polish Immigrant Middle Glass in Bayonne, New Jersey, 1915-1925," in Asher and Stephenson, eds., *Labor Divided* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

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